



CHILDREN IN
BOSNIAN TRAGEDY

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Dr. Nedzad Basic

BCR Inc.
St. Catharines, Canada

For the Children of Bosnia-Herzegovina

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CHILDREN IN BOSNIAN TRAGEDY

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A MESSAGE FROM THE RELIEF

Starvation and hopelessness have become a way of life for the children of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Homeless families fleeing from the tyranny of oppression and senseless war sneak through the night, praying the cover of darkness will protect them. Some are lucky enough to escape. Many do not.

To North Americans and people around the globe, the war in Bosnia is a sixty-second sound bite on the news. To the women and children in Bosnia, it is a living hell. Hundreds of children are still dying from sniper's bullets and we have to remember that those who are spared the bullets suffer from famine and disease and are dying slow, agonizing deaths.

The pictures we carry in our minds are of the hungry, the hopeless and the lost and the images of dead and dying children will stay with us for a very long time. We will never be able to erase the images of children alone in the streets, the women who die after brutal rapes and the old who simply waste away.

Bosnian Children Relief has made a difference in many children's lives since this terrible war began. BCR has been to Bosnia on many humanitarian missions delivering aid. And while the awful sites have chilled us, the strong spirit of these children has warmed our hearts. Each time we handed a child a piece of fruit or some bread, they thanked us in a way far better than words - with their bright smiles. It

is wonderful to know that these children still know how to smile in the middle of these terrible hardships.

The hardest thing for we as caring human beings to do was to leave these children behind, whether or not they were orphaned. They begged us not to go, or to please take them with us.

To date, we have brought several children to Canada for medical treatment and have fed and clothed thousands of families. Many more desperately need our help. And that is why we so desperately need yours.

Children In Bosnian Tragedy is the result of a collaborative effort between Dr. Nedzad Basic, Jennifer McKenzie-Pellegrini and the staff and volunteers of Bosnian Children Relief. The proceeds from the sale of this book will go to help children in need in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia, the children we were forced to leave behind; the children we promised we would help. And it is to these children that we dedicate this book.

The aim of this book is not to investigate, but to remind the world of the children's tragedy in the armed conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina and all over the world. Only mankind can spare children's lives, spare them from suffering and help them to return to a normal life, free of nightmares.

Please join us in our Mission of Hope. The fate of these children is uncertain and very desperate. By purchasing this book, you have helped to alleviate the suffering of a child.

We thank you and the children thank you.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to the numerous individuals, companies, community organizations and volunteers whose tremendous support made possible the production of this book.

My sincere admiration and thank you to you all.

May God bless you.

Fatima Basic,
President, BCR.

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EDITOR'S COMMENT

As the editor of "Children in Bosnian Tragedy", I had the task of making this terrible war something outsiders can understand. While it was a difficult task, it was one which I would not have passed up, as it was an amazing educational experience.

I hope readers will feel the anger, the pain and the sympathy I feel every time I re-read this book.

I would ask readers to indulge us two slightly unorthodox practices - the use of initials as identification and incorrect grammar in quotations. We have done this to protect the identity of our witnesses at their request and we have not changed grammar to preserve the integrity of their statements.

I thank you for buying and reading this book as it has been a labour of love for me, knowing how many children will benefit by its publication.

Thank you,

Jennifer McKenzie-Pellegrini

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK

The breakdown of the former Yugoslavia and the spread of war across Bosnia-Herzegovina is a global legal and moral question. Thousands of children have been sacrificed by the horrible war crimes committed across the country - crimes which have shaken the values and moral norms of the International Community.

The failure of the International Community to stop the war and ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Herzegovina has had devastating effects on the country. More than 2,280,000 people in Bosnia and Herzegovina have lost their homes; more than 912,000 children were forced to leave their homes and in the first 12 months of the conflict, 15,259 children lost their lives. Another 35,873 were permanently disabled.

As of July 1, 1994, in accordance with reports of the Bosnian government, approximately 50,000 children have disappeared or are known to have been killed. Thousands and thousands of children have been separated from their parents. In Bosnia, numerous children have been raped. Many children were born and died in the concentration camps across Bosnia.

In Sarajevo, 40% of the children have been wounded, 91% of the children claim to have witnessed people being seriously wounded, 72% have endured the bombing and destruction of their homes and 41% have seen people being killed. In Sarajevo, 81% of all children believe

they could easily have fallen victim to the bloody conflict during the past 12 months.

In Mostar, 57% of children reported that one or both of their parents have been wounded, 19% have themselves been wounded, 62% have seen dead bodies, 90% have seen someone who was injured in the war, 95% have been in situations during the war in which they could have been killed and every child asked said they have experienced shelling very near their homes. Seventy-five per cent of children live or lived in homes which have been attacked or shelled.

The starvation of children in concentration camps, the expulsion from and demolition of their homes, the starvation and the murder of their immediate and extended family members has left behind huge psychological scars on these children. This has destroyed any feelings of security and self-confidence in these children, leaving only the feelings of extreme uncertainty, helplessness, fear and anxiety.

In the attack on Bosnia and Herzegovina, military morals, honour and nobility did not exist. Snipers murdering children, the rape of helpless, terrified young girls and women, burning down deserted villages, bombing undefended cities and killing unarmed peasants are methods of warfare abhorred by all but those who commit the crimes.

For centuries, the honour of soldiers came from not totally destroying a city, pillaging its inhabitants and killing those not involved in the conflict. Even the most notorious tyrants have respected this unwritten rule until modern-day Bosnia, where history has been as much a victim of the war as the citizens.

The moral issues of war date back to 1864, when the foundation for the modern Geneva Convention was laid. In 1949, the Geneva Convention classed war victims into four categories, three of which protects military personnel while the fourth protects the civil population. All four classifications cover international as well as internal conflicts. Parties at war are obliged by the Conventions to humanely treat members of surrendering military organizations and members of the population who did not play a role in hostilities. It is strictly forbidden to cripple, torture, insult the personal dignity or punish soldiers without trial and conviction. It is also forbidden to destroy and capture goods not needed by the military or to unlawfully deport or dislocate, capture or take hostage those from the opposing side. It is the duty of the parties in conflict to take care of wounded and sick individuals and to collect the names of captured individuals, disregard-

ing their race, religion and nationality in order to inform the opposite party in conflict.

Also, parties in conflict and the civilian population are obliged to respect wounded and sick individuals. By these conventions, it is forbidden to engage prisoners of war in military operations and work that is dangerous to their health.

The Geneva Convention obliges countries to install these regulations during wartime to protect wounded and sick individuals from further indignity. Countries are obliged to search for violators, to prosecute or extradite them to a third-party country. The convention on the protection of the civil population demands the creation of safe or secure areas to shelter the civil population, above all sick, wounded and elderly individuals, children under 15 years of age and pregnant women.

Parties in conflict are also obliged to co-operate with the delivery of food and medical supplies to areas in need. It is strictly prohibited to attack civil hospitals or use hospital facilities for military operations. Military medical personnel and medical units are given special protection are not to be attacked by opposing sides under any circumstances.

As well, parties in conflict must make possible the communication between members of families and assist in the search and identification of family members, especially children under 13 years of age. Discrimination of the civil population is prohibited and individuals must be able to seek assistance from the International Red Cross or other humanitarian aid organizations.

Individuals who assist the sick and injured are not to be persecuted by the opposing regime and civilians are not to be deported unless it is solely for their own protection. At such time, the deporting population is obligated to find appropriate facilities for food as well as medical protection for the population that is being deported.

Twenty-eight journalist from all over the world have been killed in their efforts to expose the inhumanities against Bosnia's children. Another 40 have been wounded, 12 captured, 60 robbed, 73 attacked and six journalist have been listed as missing. Thanks to their courage, the International Community has been made aware of the event: which I believe is the deepest moral and human decline in recent history.



Part One
INTRODUCTION
A SHORT HISTORY OF BOSNIA

Bosnia-Hercegovina, the newest country in the world, spreads out over 51,129 square kilometres across the heart of Europe. With a population of close to five million people, Bosnia is predominantly Muslim, with more than 30 per cent Orthodox Christians (Serbians) 17 per cent Roman Catholics (Croats) and many other minority groups.

The country was named for the River Bosnia, dating back to the days of Ancient Rome. It borders Croatia and Italy at the north; Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) at the south and east and the Adriatic Sea to the west. The Region of Hercegovina refers to the area along the River Neretva which embraces the ancient cities of Mostar, Buna, Stolac, Blagaj, Pocitelj and Gabela, living monuments to the Ottoman Empire.

The Ottoman influence over the Balkan States in the 1500's brought new and exciting trade possibilities to the region. It was the place where East truly did meet West. The Bosnian river valleys became the most extensive trade route in Europe, making it, in effect, the only trade route between the Near East and Europe; the Mediterranean and the Danube; and the Central Balkans and the Alps.

But Bosnia's enviable strategic position also made the country the target of nations in search of expansion. It was not until the breakdown

of the Ottoman Empire that the importance of the Bosnian trade routes diminished, reducing its strategic status.

In later years, Bosnia would once again become a connecting point for Central and Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean. This was especially important in the early days of the disintegration of Socialist Yugoslavia, as the fight for the Bosnian Region is as much a fight for the transition roads between the Near and Middle East and Western Europe and the roads between Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean as it is a religious war.

PEOPLE

The Bosnian territory has been inhabited since the Paleolithic Era, 150 million years ago. Years of conquest and development by the Roman and Ottoman Empires created the strong, mutually-respective culture the country has long been known for. In Medieval times, Bosnia was the place where dissidents could go to escape persecution. It was there, during the Crusades, that Bogumilanity, from the Bulgarian State, took strong hold. The religion, based on the belief in the continuous struggle between good and evil in all humans, was banned in much of Europe, but was widely accepted in Bosnia, where it was made the official form of worship. During this time, the development of the Bosnian Church was strengthened, which had a tremendous effect in later years on the creation of the Bosnian State. With the division of the Christian Church in 1054, the split between Catholic and Orthodox beliefs put increased pressure on the Bogumil religion and the Christians.

At the same time, Bosnia was being penetrated by Turkish tribes, who provided protection for the Bogumils. The Turkish presence led to the spread of Islam throughout Bosnia. Many Bogumils, grateful for the acceptance of the Turks, converted to Islam, along with many Catholics and Cripto-Bogumils, planting the seeds for the Muslim stronghold in Bosnia as early as the 15th Century.

According to a report of the Holy Chair of 1624, there were 900,000 Muslims, 300,000 Catholics and another 150,000 Orthodox Christians living in Bosnia at that time.

In the mid-16th Century, in flight from the Inquisition of King Ferdinand and Queen Elizabeth of Spain, a great number of Jews came to Bosnia. These Sefard Jews were merchants, crafters and doctors who inhabited the major Bosnian centres of Sarajevo, Banja Luka and Travnik, where they maintained their culture and traditions. And in

the 15th Century, Gypsies, Italians, Hungarians, Ukranians, Czechs, Russians and Slovaks came to Bosnia; each bringing their own special art, culture and religion, creating a rich mosaic which had survived centuries of revolution, occupation, and war.

Until now.

CULTURE

The constant movement of various Asian and European tribes across the region of today's Bosnia has left a very rich cultural heritage which dates back to ancient times. Rich discoveries from the Paleolithic Era have been discovered close to the towns of Doboj and Prnjavor and in the valleys of the Rivers Usora and Ukrina. The most ancient settlements were discovered close to Derventa, Odzak and Kulas from the Mosteriana Period, while discoveries close to the town of Stolac were from the Gravettienne time.

From the time of the Roman domination to the beginning of the 5th Century, the influence of the Byzants became even stronger. This era was testified by the dozens of architectural monuments and sculptures which remained intact until the war.

At the end of the 10th and the beginning of the 11th Centuries, the first signs of literacy began to appear across Bosnia with the EPIGRAF, EPITAF and KTITOR monuments inscribed in stone. The first manuscripts from this region originate from the 12th Century. The first and most important trace of Bosnian literacy is the MANUSCRIPT CODEX which differs in style from the letters of the neighbouring Serbs and Croats. Most of the medieval Bosnian literature was developed by the Bosnian Church; however, much of it was destroyed during the Crusades against the Bogumils. Happily, the SECULAR BOSNIAN CODEXES from the 16th Century have been preserved. Apart from these traces of literature, there are also statements regarding the donation of testaments, the testaments themselves and letters of communication between rulers and merchants which are still preserved.

Of particular importance are the EPITAFS inscribed on STECCI, special grave monuments, in the 12th and 13th Centuries. The most famous of these are situated in Radomlje and Stolac.

There are also traces remaining today of ancient Bosnian art. Gravures (carvings) in the rocks of the Badanj cave are the most ancient monument found on Bosnian soil dating to the Mediterranean zone of the Paleolithic era.

Jewellery and sculptures have been uncovered in the valley of the River Neretva which date back to the Hellenic culture of Ancient Greece. The villa at Mogorjelo near Capljina, mosaic and fresco paintings and basilicas dating back as far as the 5th and 6th Centuries including the famous "Laura Basilica" indicate the rich cultural correspondence between Bosnia and other ancient cultures.

Traces of music in Bosnia date back to the Middle Ages when the country's rulers would organize performances at Court with musicians, dancers and artists. In that period, the organ was among the instruments played during ceremonies. It was during this same time that Bosnian church music developed.

The Persian language had a strong influence over poetry across Bosnia at the time of the Ottoman Empire. Much of the poetry was about life within the cities and towns and expressed the spiritual sentiments of the poet. There are numerous works of verse and prose preserved which were written in the Arabic language including well-known religious poems (ILAHIJE), dedicated poems (KASIDE), love poems and numerous satirical poems.

A number of works by talented Bosnian writers were translated from Oriental languages into several European languages over the centuries, which give testimony to ancient Bosnian life.

Mosques, hamams, libraries, medresas (religious schools) and hans (travellers' shelters) were constructed during the Ottoman empire and reflect the Turkish architectural style. However, the Oriental influence of the Turks did not extend into the creation of Catholic and Orthodox Christian churches which retained traditional medieval style.

Judaism was practised by Bosnian Jews in both Hebrew and Spanish during the 18th Century. The Rabin David founded the High Rabbi School in Sarajevo in 1768. There were many famous Jewish writers living and working in Bosnia at that time. It was also during the 18th Century that the first books were translated from Ancient Greek and printed in the Bosnian Cyrillic and Latin letters and the Hebrew and Turkish languages. The first bookstore was opened in Mostar at this time.

The 19th and early 20th Centuries saw the acceleration of art and culture spread across Bosnia and Hercegovina with the arrival of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. In 1921 the first theatre opened and in 1923 the Philharmonic Orchestra was founded in Sarajevo. Soon after that, the modern ballet school and the Opera were opened. Movie

theatres opened in Bosnia in the early part of the century which brought new technology to the country and also brought the Bosnian people in touch with the modern world.

WHY BOSNIA?

Why has Bosnia been chosen as a horrid exercise in human hatred and contempt? As a multicultural, multi-religious nation where Orthodox, Catholics, Muslims, Jews and others lived in harmony, Bosnia served as an example to the world the true meaning of peace.

The centuries-long tolerance among Bosnia's peoples has created its rich cultural heritage. This lasted throughout generations until this latest burst of merciless war, in which human beastiality exploded across Bosnia like never before on the face of the earth.

The New International Order led directly to the gap between the ideological political polarization of the International Community which, in turn, brought the fall of Socialism as a world system. The breakdown of Socialism as a political force made possible the events which led to the bloody conflict in Bosnia. However, the fall of Socialism did not completely lead to the breakdown of those social forces which have been bearing upon this project. Under the new circumstances, National Socialism appears as the platform from which it is attempted to discontinue the processes of reconstruction of the International Community. Combining nationalism and religious fanaticism with fascism, there have been attempts to provoke conflicts of wider world proportions and thus discontinue the processes which promote the development of the world community. This global conflict could be provoked only where the three greatest religious ideologies (Catholicism, Orthodoxy and Islam) have the deepest roots. That place is Bosnia.

That is why Bosnia was chosen for this horrible experiment of the 20th Century. And that is why the question of the survival of Bosnia today parallels the survival of the rest of the world. Divided and destroyed, Bosnia is the symbol of the divided world and foreshadows new divisions and new crimes. Unified and preserved, Bosnia is the symbol of unity, community of all peoples and the civilization of the world.

The destiny of Bosnia lies in the benevolence of the political and economic Superpowers as they have set a dangerous precedent by largely ignoring this war. This inaction has been interpreted as some by advocacy and has led to further global conflicts. How much longer

can we go on saying "It's not our war"? How many more children have to die before the governments of the world stand united and declare that this is wrong?

Part Two KILLING THE CHILDREN

The attack on Bosnia and Hercegovina began with the full-scale bombing of towns and villages and the mass execution of their inhabitants. Expelled from their towns, villages and homes; often dragged from their beds in the dead of the night and threatened with injury or death, children were certainly the most endangered part of the Bosnian population. They were not and have not been spared from mass liquidation. Instead, these children shared the same terrible fate as their parents and grandparents in the earliest days of the war, before civilian resistance could be organized.

Mass executions took place in towns all along the River Drina. In Zvornik, Srebrenica, Visegrad and Foca; in Gorazde, where the majority of victims during the town's occupation were the young, cruelty and viciousness sunk to the lowest level. However, it was from Sarajevo that the first dreadful pictures of suffering children were seen around the world. The city became the largest concentration camp in the world and a common graveyard for the masses of dead. Sarajevo has become the symbol of brutality, dishonesty, insensitivity and distress; of the world's cynicism and apathy and, surprisingly, the symbol of courage, solidarity and strength of spirit.

1. DREADFUL TESTIMONIES

The bombing of the town on Zvornik began at 8:30 a.m. on April 8, 1992. Many were still in their beds. Specifically targeted by the attack were the predominantly Muslim areas across the undefended town. Indescribable crimes took place in the residential area of Tabaci where, in the "Red Buildings", whole families were executed.

The entry of the army and paramilitary forces into the town caused a wave of panic among the population, who evacuated in hoards towards Tuzla. The civilian refugees were constantly assaulted by the paramilitary formations they passed along the way. Countless children were killed in these assaults. S.S., a witness from Potocani, recounts the assault on a convoy of refugees on May 10, 1992. "First they all had their hands wire-tied and then were shot by burst-fire from automatic machine guns near the Forest Boljkovica."

Sadly, this was not uncommon. Many civilian convoys have simply disappeared without a trace.

I.M., President of the Municipality of Zvornik, stated at a press conference on June 8, 1992, that in the municipality, more than 3,000 civilians died during the first two months of ethnic cleansing. ("Vernji List", June 9, 1992)

Mass slaughter was carried out in the villages of this region. On June 25, 1992, dozens of families were executed throughout Bosnia. Entire bloodlines became virtually extinct in a matter of hours. Children too young to fully understand the war would never grow old enough to learn about it in school.

Little more than a month earlier, terror enveloped the tiny village of Zaklopaca where hundreds perished, including 12 members of one family. ("Helsinki Watch I", pgs. 51-55)

The dramatic testimonies of survivors from this family went around the world.

"At 4 a.m. on Saturday, May 16, 1992, a vehicle with reservists arrived to the village of Zaklopaca. They surrounded the village. At around 5 a.m., police cars with reservists and the policeman M.M. from the village Milici, whom we all knew, came to the village. There also arrived another five cars of "LADA NIVA" make with armed people who were sitting even on the car roofs. On one of those cars, there was written in capital letters: SLAUGHTER.

"Some of them were clothed in camouflage uniforms while some had their faces disguised by nylon tights or sunglasses. Some were in civilian clothes. They had beards, cockades and their other symbols.

They came to the village and asked for the arms. All the inhabitants in the village were without the arms, since they had already handed over all the arms they legally possessed to the newly-formed local authorities who requested the arms to be returned. Two men tried to leave the village, but they were caught, shot in the legs and then in head. They killed another five men and then started to shoot at our houses. When the shooting died down, we came out of the houses and ran out of the village. I saw my brother and father dead."

S.H. stated that she had seen, out of the window of her house, the same police officer from Milici murdering her husband Ibrahim.

"Only a few steps away there were killed two young men, brothers Osman and Bego Hamidovic. Osman died instantaneously, while Bego was long alive, asking for help and water. Unfortunately, we could not have helped him. I saw the murdering of Salim Abdic and Murat and Muradif Hreljic. After that, the soldiers went into the house of Salim Abdic where there were his elder brother Musto Abdic and his father Saban, his mother Melva, his daughter, his daughter-in-law Zulifja, his one-year-old child and his son Samir, aged seven. They were killed all together. When we reached them they were all in blood; one next to the other.

"After seeing all these dead people in our village, I took the children, left the dead husband on the ground and ran away with the others, by a truck."

And another woman also witnessed murder through her window. This time it was her sons and their friends.

"I heard when they started firing in Kaldhma (part of the village of Zaklopaca), being only a few hundred metres away. It seemed like the heavens opened. The shooting was mingled with the screams of our women and children; our dearest. They killed fifty of them. Among them were many women and children. The youngest child was only one-and-a-half. When they killed all the people in Kaldhma, they sat in their cars and left.

"First I found my murdered husband, then his brother I. in front of his house. In the centre of the village I found my son Huso and many women and children. They were all dead. After that I found my neighbour Resid Hodzic. Ten members of his family were killed - his father, mother, two brothers, two daughters-in-law and four children.

"At night, at around nine o'clock, when I saw that my husband and five sons were dead, I left the village. I walked all through the night, aimlessly. I hid in the graveyard, in the wood. I wandered through the

wood, down the streams, all alone. On the third day I met a group of refugees and two of my grandchildren who survived."

"When the paramilitaries noticed something moving in the bushes, they shot in our direction. When we got near the village of Damcici, one of the children from our group wandered to the perimeter of the wood, only to confront a soldier. The soldier asked him where the others were, but the child did not answer. The soldier then shot the boy. His mother ran out of the bushes and another man ran after her. They were both shot dead by the soldier. I do not know the names of the people, but I recognized them as having been from our area." (Z.H., according to "Helsinki Watch I", p. 55).

Before the slaughter in Zaklopaca, most residents of the municipality of Vlasenica had been expelled. Villagers were subjected to crime - their houses were robbed and women and young girls were routinely raped. More than 5,000 citizens had to leave their homes forever.

"I went into the house and said to my children: 'Quickly, take your underwear and two T-shirts.' They started to cry. Actually, they had not yet understood what was going on around us. When I told them that we had to run away, they wanted to take a video recorder with them. I told them that we had no place to hide it. We packed everything in two bags. Everything else was left. There remained the memories of my first days in school; first love, childbirth of my children...everything we had remained in that dear place.

"Moving on to Kladanj, a column was made of over 100 vehicles. Every one of us was searched in detail. All men of age were separated from us and not allowed to pass. I do not know what happened with them..." (Statement of N.N.; see "I. Kajan", pgs. 54-56)

In Novo Selo, near Zvornik, about 150 Bosnians - women, children and old men - were forced into the Mosque where, in front of them, the local Imam Memić Suljo, was slain. (See R. Gutman; "A Witness to Genocide", Macmillan Publishing Company, N.Y., 1993, p.78)

Out of the village of Kozluk, near Zvornik, about 1,800 people, including 70 women with small children, were exiled to the Hungarian border. They were sent back by the Hungarian Border Authorities and then situated in the camp for Bosnians on Palic. Prior to their expulsion from the village, many houses had been burned, all young women were raped and residents were forced to sign statements confirming that they had voluntarily left all of their property to the local authorities.

"The whole thing was arranged in advance," said Judith Kumin, the UN High Commission of Refugees' representative in Belgrade, Serbia.

2. CITIES OF HORROR

Particularly grave crimes were committed against the children in Gorazde, where the greatest number of women and children had taken refuge. All roads leading to or from the city were cut off in May. Water and electricity were also stopped. The undefended town was exposed to day-to-day shelling from the surrounding hills. Thousands upon thousands of wounded men, women and children did not even have the most basic medical help. Due to the shortage of antibiotics, every day many children and elderly people died from the various infections which spread like wildfire throughout the town. Isak Samokovlija Hospital in Gorazde had neither the capacity nor the medical equipment or supplies to treat the ever-growing number of the wounded and the ill. Operations were frequently performed without anaesthetic in conditions far from sterile. Painkillers were virtually non-existent for those in the post-operative wards.

Meanwhile, the hospital walls shook constantly from the relentless shelling.

In the first months of the siege of Gorazde, Danish photojournalist Jørgen Hildebrandt managed to break through the lines. Here is his story.

"The front line was in the town itself and I could not walk freely. One morning, I and my attendant sneaked up to the River Drina where I saw decayed human bodies floating on the river's surface. My attendant told me that they had tried to bury the bodies, but since there were too many of them, they were therefore compelled to leave them in the river. According to him, these were the bodies of civilians who had been executed in the concentration camp in Foca. There was one camp for males and one for the females. Camp authorities threw dead bodies into the river that later on rose to the surface.

"The refugees situated in the ex-school in Gorazde had no food for two days. Those days there were about 3,600 wounded in the town, among them 350 with serious wounds. The town was grenaded daily. In the town there could often be heard the invitations to the USA and Western countries to help the dying Bosnia.

"There was no drinking water and no electricity in the town. In order to get some drinking water it was necessary to walk even two

kilometres under unrelenting sniper fire. Many who took the "Road to Life" never returned. Most of them were children. One morning I saw an eight-year-old boy wounded by a sniper in the leg. Even though wounded, he kept the bucket tightly clutched in his hand, taking care to save as much of the precious liquid as possible. When the father ran up to him and told him that the wound was not dangerous, the boy replied that he was sorry for not being able to bring a full bucket of water. Water meant to live or die."

Gorazde was to face extremely turbulent times in April, 1994, when the town was surrounded by a new wave of tank units which had left their positions around Sarajevo under the threat of NATO air strikes. This assault forced the 70,000 people living there to squeeze into an area one-tenth of the size of the 350 square kilometre free zone. The severe overcrowding led to massive suffering, new diseases and new frustrations. The attack accounted for the deaths of more than 800 civilians - most of them women and children. Only time will tell the exact number of children who died in this bloody and savage assault. However, there is no doubt that next to Sarajevo, Gorazde is the biggest childrens' graveyard in the world and is the biggest black mark against humanity in 50 years.

Mass killing and exile were also enforced in Foca. More than 21,000 were exiled or executed. In the Partisan Sports Hall in the centre of town, a collective camp was created where the population was either deported or slaughtered. Subsequently, this hall became notorious for the brutal sex assaults on women and young girls. Several other camps had their own "raping centres" where, following the attacks, women and children were executed.

After the first stage of ethnic cleansing in Foca, only a few hundred Bosnians remained in the town. Most were exiled during the next wave of atrocities or were exchanged for soldiers on other battlefields. The remaining few mainly consisted of women and children whose husbands and fathers were already dead. Fourteen children were exchanged for prisoners, while others remained in hospital wards, their fates uncertain. Since there was no information about their parents, they could not be treated as orphans and could not be evacuated. The local authorities in Foca, who changed the town's name to Srbinje, were resolute: "Here, there is no future for the Muslims, no matter if they are children or grown-ups. They have to leave." These children have never been seen again. ("Times", November 19, 1993)

The majority of the population from the villages surrounding Foca was murdered. Many of the villages were then burnt to the ground. In Godijevo, 20 women and children had taken refuge in one house. When they were discovered, the house was fired upon. One woman was killed and several children were wounded. On that day, soldiers went from house to house, setting every one on fire.

"I saw one soldier kick open the door to my house, and then I saw smoke coming out of the house," said N.K. from Godijevo.

Those who survived the massacre were taken to the camp in Foca. Many have never been seen since. Men were taken to the camp in Bileca. The village of Jelec was also left a pile of ashes and ruin. Earlier, the population of this small mountain village had surrendered all of the weapons they legally owned to the new authorities with the guarantee that nothing would happen to them. Nevertheless, the village was attacked on May 2. The shelling lasted for two days.

Some speculate that many of the undefended villagers could have been killed with the very guns they surrendered.

"We fled into the hills, from where I watched the attack on the village. After the mortars stopped falling, the village was blockaded, and infantry units entered the village. The people who could not or would not flee were killed and the Muslim homes were burned, including stables..." (According to A.H.; "Helsinki Watch II", P. 263)

In the village of Mesaja, a number of women and children who had taken refuge in the nearby forest were murdered on July 3.

"We had been afraid for some time because, prior to the attack, shots were fired in the village every night. So we slept in the forest. The morning of the attack, we were still in the forest, but they knew where we were and come up to us. It was about 6:20 a.m. They started shooting to us and we started to run. During the shooting, they killed an elderly man called Edhem. They also killed Zahir and Selman and a woman called Selima. I don't know their surnames, though. They also shot a woman who carried her three-year-old child on her back while she was running away... There were about 24 women and an equal number of children who they arrested... The (wounded) women were taken to the high school in Foca, but the seven men were left behind in the forest with the remaining Serbian soldiers. My husband was among the seven, and he had been wounded in the fighting. People have told me that they were all killed," said one woman from Mesaja. ("Helsinki Watch II", pgs. 245-246)

Survivors have testified that at the beginning of April, 1992, almost the whole Djudjerija family was killed. On that occasion, eighteen children between the ages of two and 13 were sacrificed. In the village of Codor, two boys were brutally murdered in front of their parents. Crimes by one side bred despair and vengeance by the other.

The circle was closed.

3. THE NIGHTMARE AT BOSANSKA POSAVINA

Brcko, a small university town, is situated on the bank of the River Sava. No-one believed that it could become a chamber of horrors as it did during the first two months of the war. According to reports from the Municipal Crisis Headquarters, nearly 5,000 civilians were murdered in this peaceful town in the valley during the Spring of 1992. ("Novi Vejesnik", June 28, 1992)

According to A.P., a 47-year-old resident of Brcko, after the military attack came bloody days for the city.

"During a lull in the fighting, I found that my son-in-law Hajro (age 35) and two friends Hazem and Mrso, had been killed. I run to the home of a Serbian neighbour to ask for safe haven, but I was turned away. The shooting started again and I fell into a shallow hole and crawled through an open door of another house. Approximately 40 people were hiding in the attic, but I hid in a corridor in the basement because I thought it was safer.

"Shortly, therefore, I heard shooting and yelling - someone kicked open the front door. Then I heard people running upstairs and shooting throughout the house. The people in the attic were probably killed. Someone asked: 'Whose house is this?' and second person replied that it belonged to a Muslim. Yet a third person said 'Grujice, don't take anything from the house now, our car is already full. We'll come back later.'

"Their car was full of personal belongings and furniture."

("A Helsinki Watch Report...", p. 134.)

Several death camps had been set up in the centre of the town. Only a few individuals managed to survive during the first days. The most infamous one among them was the camp "Luka" where, through the middle of June, 1992, countless citizens were executed. Most victims were women and children. One camp inmate testified that 20-25 people were knifed in front of Luka on May 5, 1992. The same witness said the bodies of the dead were driven away and thrown into

the Sava. According to this source, the camp guards were always drunk and were seen taking green pills.

"Then they were really wild." ("Vidjeti: Supplement United States Submission of Information to the United Nations Security Council, Former Yugoslavia")

The village of Brezovo Polje, near Brcko, was turned into a prison camp where inmates were massively executed. This camp became particularly well-known for the guards' habit of raping little girls. Three hotels were converted into brothels where gang rapes were performed.

Upon the army and paramilitary groups' entrance into Brcko, all wealthy Bosnians in town were arrested or assassinated. As ordered by the local authorities, the Muslim and Catholic populations were forbidden to leave their homes. Later on, the army and police took hostages who were never returned. The greatest part of Brcko's population died in camps or the "investigation centres" located throughout the town. Whole families were taken to camps and executed. All mosques were turned into temporary investigation centres where civilians were killed. Corpses were thrown into the River Sava or were cremated by the authorities.

"I hid in my neighbour's basement with approximately 25 other people, mostly elderly persons. My mother, brother and I left the basement and we went to my house... We were arrested on the street by four or five paramilitaries who did not ask questions, but they started to beat me until I fell to the ground. Then I was taken to the mosque. Approximately 100 to 150 men, between the ages of 15 and 80, were already in the mosque. We were forced to sing Cetnik (Serbian Nationalist) songs. At night, we were ordered to squat in a single line and told that if we fell asleep, we would never wake up. During the night, local Serbs from Brcko, who were dressed in Cetnik uniforms, would come and beat us with their boots.

Usually three to four Cetniks come in every 10 minutes. They beat people at random, including the old men. Each person was beaten for approximately 10 minutes...

"... While we were being held in the mosque, some hold-out Muslim forces were shooting into Brcko after it had fallen to Serbian troops. At one point, the paramilitaries tied a white ribbon around a prisoner's arm. They told him to walk around the area to see if a Muslim sniper would shoot him. Because the prisoner wore a white ribbon, our forces could have mistaken him for a Cetnik and shot him...

"... After they got bored with beating me, they took me to the hallway in the hospital and made me stand by the window overlooking Muslim-controlled areas of the town. Muslim forces were trying to take Brcko back and were firing at Serbian positions throughout the town. The Muslims were shooting at the hospital which the Serbs seemed to be using as a headquarters. I was made to stand in the window for 15 to 20 minutes and could very well have been shot by Muslim soldiers...The shooting from Muslim positions continued, but stopped shortly after they saw me standing in the window. I presume that they recognized me and realized that I was being used as a human shield." ("Helsinki Watch I", pgs. 96-97)

Ten settlements were completely demolished and their inhabitants, predominantly Bosnians, were exiled. More than 80 per cent of them were banished from the city or were killed.

Those who remained were forced to live under difficult conditions, exposed to molestation and were deprived of even the most basic human rights. Most were forced to renounce their faith, change their names and assume another person's identity. Numerous families whose members were of differing religions were shattered and their children abandoned.

Before the attack on Bosnia, the town of Bosanski Samac was a town of traders, with a long history of a strong textile industry. It boasted a large, modern factory where the most fashionable clothes in the country were made.

It was a town where, even centuries ago, East met West. It was a town where two worlds and two civilizations came together.

And it was a town of tolerance which exploded, seemingly overnight, into a place of indescribable violence and horror.

On the Croatian side of the city, the night air was often filled with children's cries and women's screams from the police stations, the elementary schools; from virtually anywhere that could be used as a detention centre. According to one witness, one night 15 camp inmates were murdered in Crkvina, a camp which had once been a farming co-operative.

Daily beatings, starvation and a lack of sanitary conditions (no water, no toilets) brought on a host of diseases and epidemics which claimed the lives of the most frail every day. Numerous families were forcefully separated. Parents were deported into camps while children remained alone at home, abandoned. They were later to be used during prisoner exchanges.

Violence toward children was commonplace in other neighbouring towns, where children were kept in the sports hall for several days, then forbidden to return to their homes. Many, many cases of rape were reported. In the villages of Posavska Mahala and P. Lipik, women and children were forced to move from village to village, exiled over and over again. Their houses were burnt to the ground as a way to remind them there was no reason to return.

"The Croatian military police come into the Muslim village Hasici where me, my sister and our neighbour and our four children fled. They said we had to go back home...they said they would burn the Muslim houses if they kept us with them. When we got home, we had to work in the fields. Then the soldiers, my neighbours, started mistreating women in their homes." (L.L. "Helsinki Watch II," Pg. 231)

Massive forces from the former Yugoslav National Army invaded the Muslim town of Dobo. On May 3, 1992, police and military authorities had asked the Muslims and Croats to surrender their arms. There was no way the unarmed civilians could protect themselves from the attack being waged upon them.

The general mobilization of troops had been announced over the local radio and regardless of their national affiliation, citizens were conscripted in great numbers. All Bosnians and Croats - 6,000 in the first days of the town's occupation, were immediately taken to death camps set up on the town's outdoor handball playground. However, even though the population expressed utter loyalty towards the new civilian and military authorities and the leading national parties and the local municipal authorities agreed that no resistance was to be taken by the new regime, areas of the town populated by Muslims were bombed.

On May 3, as 20,000 Bosnians were leaving parts of the town, mortars and tanks shelled the citizens as they ran for shelter. Houses were looted and parts of the town were set ablaze. Martial law was enforced over the town and a curfew allowed residents to leave their homes for three hours each day - from 8:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. - to run their daily errands.

Ten days into the town's occupation, the remaining houses were searched. People were being executed in the streets. Parents were taken away to camps, leaving their children to be prisoners-of-war. A number of women and young girls were taken to the classrooms at the local secondary school where they were repeatedly raped.

"Once I saw the face of a woman I knew; her daughter was with her. Three men were with them inside (the classroom). On the occasion, I was raped with a gun by one of the three men already in the room. I didn't recognize him. Others stood watching. Some spat on us. They were raping me, the mother and her daughter at the same time. Sometimes you had to accept 10 men, sometimes three. Sometimes when they were away, they wouldn't call me for one or two days. I wanted nothing; not bread, not water, just to be alone. I felt I wanted to die. We had no change of clothes and couldn't wash ourselves." ("Helsinki Watch II," p. 218)

All reminders of the Muslim culture and religion have been abolished. The Carsijska mosque and a Catholic church were bombed on May 3, 1992. Even the mosque located within the Doboj Castle was not spared, forever erasing a monument to 16th Century architecture. Collective centres for those who did not escape in time were set up around town. Many were taken away, never to return. Some were conscripted and sent into the first battles of the war without weapons.

The local furniture ceased its normal production lines to make coffins for the dead.

The town of Doboj was turned into a town of human torment and death.

Children's afflictions were particularly severe in the villages surrounding Doboj. The villages whose residents managed to organize themselves and offer some resistance experienced exceptional hardships. In Grabska, a grenade crashed and exploded into a cellar where more than 40 women and children had taken refuge. A number of them were wounded. Seven children died. One survivor, E.H., a 12-year-old girl, lost both of her legs in the attack. Happily, she was reunited with her family in Germany in July, 1994, after seven months of medical treatment in Canada. She will never forget that terrible day as long as she lives. Here is her story.

"On May 1, 1992, we slept at our grandmother's. We didn't dare sleep in our house because it was close to the main road where columns of soldiers and tanks passed every day. We were terribly afraid, but secretly hoped that they would not attack us. It seemed, in those last days, that people anticipated big troubles coming. The old invited their children to say their farewells. The only place where people gathered was the mosque, and there they silently prayed for peace.

"Everything started somewhat suddenly. That day, May 10, broke; the weather was clear. Nothing implied that at 11:00 a.m. that day, hell

was to be raised in our village. We, being children, saw war with different eyes. We imagined that it would be like a story out of the reading book. We expected partisans to come and the real battle. But, everything turned out the opposite. There were neither the partisans nor the battle. We were all alone and helpless. Around us, grenades were falling from all directions, killing or destroying anything that happened to be nearby. We didn't see the other soldiers, either; those who assaulted us. Houses were vanishing in clouds of dust and smoke.

"I was hid, with the other children and several women, in a house that hadn't been completely finished. We were in a room that was half-built into the ground. We lay on the floor, one next to the other, with our ears tightly pressed. All at once, the room got dark and a thundering explosion was heard.

"After that, I don't know what was going on. I heard children crying and screaming. I tried to get up, but I found my legs somewhat strangely disobedient. I propped up on my hands, and felt myself lying in a warm liquid sticking to my hands. I felt no pain. Soon after, my brother took me out of that room. They put me in a blanket and took me to the village out-patient clinic, but they couldn't offer me any help. The only thing they did was tie my legs, so as not to lose much blood, and cut with scissors parts of the skin from which remnants of my legs were still hanging. It was only then that I started to feel the agonizing pain, making me often lose my consciousness.

"I was awfully thirsty and terribly sleepy. I couldn't fall asleep. My mother was next to me. Her composure gave me some strange strength. In the eyes of the people surrounding me I saw some sparking decisiveness and the readiness to welcome the last moments of their lives with dignity. I didn't dare fail them. I didn't dare to fail my mother. In the moments of the most searing pain, I even managed to smile a few times to my mother, whose strength was starting to ebb away. Bombing lasted until 8:00 p.m. and then everything subsided as if nothing had happened. For a moment, I fell into a kind of drowse and it seemed to me as if I had dreamed it had only been a dream.

"Unbearable pain spreading through my legs shattered my unfinished dream that would unfortunately never come back.

"I don't recall how I was transported to the hospital in Doboj. I stayed there for two months. There I learned that in the same shelter, seven people had been killed. Out of them, I knew Amela Alic, aged 13, her brother, aged 15 and Amela Hurtic, aged 14. A great number of children had been wounded. Some of them had their hands torn off or

their eyes damaged from the deadly explosion. After being released from the hospital, I was transferred to Zagreb in Croatia wherefrom, by the mediation of the Canadian humanitarian organization "Bosnian Children Relief" I was transferred to Canada for medical treatment."

Children grew up quickly in this terrifying Bosnian hell. In the unequal fight between life and death, death often won.

Another crime was committed in the first half of July, 1992, near Dobo. While the deportees were being marched through territory controlled by the Bosnian army, children and their parents were robbed of their belongings and then were killed.

"At Trnoplje, we were transferred to railroad cattle cars. There I saw a woman call out: "Why are you doing this to us?" She was pulled out of the group by the guards. Then a man called out "Why are you taking my wife?" He was pulled out as well. Later I heard shots. I think the couple was killed, but I did not see them shot. I never saw the couple again." (S.S.; See: "Helsinki Watch II," Pgs. 223-224)

"They took us off the train near Dobo, and we walked the next seven kilometres. We walked along a carpet of childrens' clothes and blankets that were left from the previous convoy of refugees (displaced persons). Some left their old family members along the road, since it was impossible to carry them any further." ("Helsinki Watch II", p. 225)

4. THE TRAGEDY OF BOSANSNIAN KRAJINA

The population in Bosansnian Krajina has experienced the most severe fate in the history of this part of Bosnia. In this region, as in the whole of Bosnia-Herzegovina, children have shared the same fates as their parents. They were deported to camps and exiled without any consideration of human sensitivity. They were raped and murdered. They suffered every imaginable form of torture. Thousands upon thousands of women, children and old men were deported from their homes by cattle wagons.

Tortured, hungry, terror-stricken and tearful children, with no understanding of what was happening around them, awaited their fate. Their silent sorrow for a lost home, toy, dog or cat showed on their innocent faces. This was the sight one could see through the holes in railroad cattle wagons passing through Banja Luka and other towns.

When the train would stop, hundreds of small, emaciated hands would stretch from the cattle wagon's holes. Those were the sights of human agony that were images on newsreels of Poland, dating back some 50 years. But this was not a movie, it was Europe, at the end of

the 20th century. The grim reality will cast a long shadow on the democratic traditions and aims of contemporary Europe and all nations.

That was the sight which deeply shattered the belief in humanity, morality and dignity by many who witnessed it.

The municipality of Prijedor was to suffer the heaviest blow of the Nationalist's savagery. In the town itself, Bosnian Muslims represented the majority of the population prior to ethnic cleansing. Afterward, only a small percentage of the Muslims remained. According to some indicators, more than 40,000 Muslims and 5,000 Croats had been banished from this region or murdered. All surrounding villages that had been populated by Muslims had been obliterated. Bosnians who had not managed to escape were executed in the most monstrous ways. New common graveyards materialized, new concentration camps were set up, mosques were demolished and schools and hospitals wrecked. Virtually every reminder of the centuries of mutual respect enjoyed by residents of this region were destroyed.

It is not known, and it is unclear as to whether it ever will be learned, the number of children murdered during a grenade attack on 3,000 refugees retreating from Donja Ljubija towards the forest; if it will ever be learned how many charred bodies of children remain in the ruins and fire sites in Kozarac, Hambrin, Carakovo, Rakovcani, Rizvanovici; if it will ever be learned how many tiny gypsies remain in the mass tomb in Volaric; how many innocent lives were forever extinguished; how many families were flung into the old pits of the mines and how many bodies were hurled into the common graveyards of the death factories.

According to some reports, in the mass tomb located near the Europa Inn on the road from Prijedor to Banja Luka, more than 700 bodies have been interred. The same source estimates that in the villages neighbouring Prijedor, between 3,000 and 5,000 people have been buried. Almost every Prijedor village was turned into a common graveyard.

The old mines jealously keep the most horrible, appalling stories of human cruelty a secret forever. The settlement at Kozarac symbolizes the collective tragedy and common agony of all Bosnians and the whole civilized world.

There is no other place where more tears have been shed in one day than in Kozarac, a small settlement of villages at the foot of a mountain. Everything was levelled. The people who had lived in these small, quiet villages were either murdered, or had been lucky

enough to escape. The sorrowful wind wailing around the remnants of the burnt-out houses calls the names of the dead. Sometimes, a dog can be heard whining into the ashes of his former home, expecting, hoping for, its small playmates to return.

Kozarac was assaulted from all sides on May 24, 1992. Tanks, howitzers and mortar shells shattered the peace of this community in an attack which lasted for two days. Scores of people died, including a large number of women and children.

Two days later, an enormous convoy of refugees tried to leave Kozarac and moved toward the forest. But the congregation was noticed and unrelenting deadly fire turned towards the helpless victims.

On May 28, dozens of women and children were murdered en route to a concentration camp at the sports hall in Prijedor.

"There was a six kilometre-long convoy of people from Kozarac on the middle of the road, where they separated women and children from the men...In the middle of the road, there was a house in which people were being beaten to death and people were being cut with bottles. We heard noise at that point. They were going through lists and picking out people from the convoy to kill. Sarac Mumin, and Becir Mudunjanin were killed during the convoy's exodus," said the witness J. ("Helsinki Watch II", pgs. 70-71)

The other convoy of women, children and elderly men started toward the village of Trnopolje. This convoy was attacked in the village of Sivce, where much of the population was massacred. The survivors were taken from one camp to another, where the seemingly endless slaughter continued.

"The attack took place on a Sunday morning. That morning, two women delivered babies. The next job was amputating the finger of a boy who had shot himself with a hunting rifle, which many of the boys had. When the shelling started, many wounded people started coming to the clinic...a lot of wounded women and children came. People lost their legs after a shell hit them as they were leaving the shelter and running toward the forest. The soldiers were shooting at every moving thing, with no discrimination among targets," said R.K. ("Helsinki Watch II", P. 66)

On May 29, 1992, all defence of Kozarac ceased and it was then that the true bloodshed started. The paramilitary groups and the army entered the village and anyone who happened to be in their homes was executed on the spot.

J.A. from Kozarac said this of the massacre:

"In the morning, we came back to the village, to the house of A.H. and saw Hasan Alic, his wife Zejna and his neighbour Javor Smajic, aged 80, lying on the ground. They had been torn apart by rifle shots. We buried them next to the house and moved to the neighbouring village Heraci. There we found Alic Husein (aged 80), Alic Murahem (aged 80) and his son Alic Refik - dead. We buried them, too...All the houses in our village had been burned several times. They would set it on fire and leave, and we would extinguish the fire; then they would come back and set it to fire again..." ("The Centre for War Crimes Research, Vol. 1", pgs. 33-34, Zenica, 1992)

A considerable number of women and children were killed during the civilian retreat to Brdjani, Besici, Mujici and Softici. Particularly heavy children's casualties were recorded near the Brdjali forest. All the houses were burned. Those who did not manage to flee were killed in front of their houses. Their bodies remained there for more than 20 days, making their identification impossible. The pungent odour of decomposed human corpses could be smelled for kilometres. In the house of Besic Hatemina in Kozarac, 12 people, most of them elderly, were set on fire.

Between June 12-14, the army rounded Sivici again. K.M., a witness to the terror, said "...About 150 men were taken to Prijedor and nothing was known about their further fate. Some people were instantaneously murdered.

"They killed a young man, his surname is Jakupovic. I don't know his name. Fifty of us were pushed into a barn. Being small, it could not have placed all of us. I was on the door and watched them shoot that guy. First, he was wounded in the left side of his chest and was running to the barn. He could not have taken shelter in our place. He reached a cooking stove where they fired at him again. He fell dead next to the stove. He remained there overnight and the next day I buried him with the help of another man." (See "The...Research," Vol. 1, pg. 27)

Refugees from nearby villages who had been detained in Sivici were moved by the railroad cattle wagons to Maglaj. From there, they had to walk 25 km up to the territories under the control of the Bosnian army. According to one witness: "The mothers who could not walk quickly had their small children snatched and flung away. ("The...Research", Vol. 1, p.40)

"People were killed when the villagers were first rounded up and while we were travelling in the convoy. Soldiers pointed a gun at one of our babies and told us to give up all we had. My own grandmother

"who was 107 years old" - was killed during the initial evacuation from Kozara. She said she was just too old to go in any convoy. The soldiers injured her first and then they burned her in her house. All the others who tried to stay in their houses were killed." (Jasmina; "Helsinki Watch II," p. 68)

On the left side of the River Sava are the villages Hambarine, Biscani, Rizvanovici, Carakovo, Rakovcani, Zecovi and Alisici. The smaller settlements which surround these villages are vacant, haunted only by the ghosts of those who did not survive the torture.

These villages had been surrounded by the army and paramilitary forces even before the beginning of the war. It was from the military camps in this region that military and paramilitary formations left for the battlefields in Croatia. When the assault on these villages was initiated at the end of May, 1992, there was a mass evacuation by terrified citizens to the nearby woods. Their only hope was that the brush would provide them with some cover. They escaped from village to village, forming big convoys that moved in different directions.

An enormous convoy of 15,000 people withdrawing towards the woods was kept under constant fire. A part of this convoy surrendered while the other part continued towards the neighbouring villages. Another convoy moved over the Kurava mountain in the direction of Ljubija.

So many people were wounded or killed in these convoys. Children were the most severely afflicted. In the chaos, many children were simply lost, separated from their families forever. Mothers, out of their wits with worry, searched silently, frantically, in long lines, moving through the blackness of the woods. The only safe time to look was at night. At least there was hope that the soldiers had fallen asleep and would not hear the rustling of leaves or the gentle sobbing of the mothers' despair.

The "Mladen Stojanovici" hospital, under constant attack, had to be relocated from the village of Hambarina to a hotel in a neighbouring area, further hampering efforts to treat the sick and injured.

The majority of the people from these congregations were ultimately returned to their fallen villages. From there, people were selected and taken to the Keraterm, Omarska and Trnopolje death camps. On June 18, the fallen villages were blasted again by rocket fire and on the following day, more than 1,000 people were killed.

"Women and children were murdered immediately, in front of their houses. Some were taken by buses toward Prijedor. They were

brought up to funnel-shaped holes in the fields, murdered, and then covered up by power shovels...Further on they would proceed, looting those villages, raping, killing...They would snatch away money, gold, and everything that was valuable...During the massacre, many families were exterminated since all the men were murdered. The massacre continued on July 22, as well as the "cleansing" of the remaining villages on the left bank of the Sana, Carakovo and Secovi. It was assumed that about 800 people had been killed in these villages that day.

"Over Radio Prijedor, it was announced that nothing would happen to those who give up within certain term. However, most of those who did were stripped naked, beaten, taken over to the River Sana and killed there. All this was overlooked by women standing nearby.

"The survived women and children were located in several houses where they were persistently beaten, raped and killed. Some were transferred to the camp Trnopolje. There was a specially trained group for ethnic cleansing led by a Z.K. that was exceptionally cruel," said S.A., a witness to the atrocities. ("The...Research", Vol. 1, p. 43)

Only a rare few managed to escape from the village of Carakovo. According to witnesses, this village became a common graveyard where more than 1,500 women, children and elderly people were interred.

"Some were buried in the yards, the others in the parks near the road or in the gardens. Those were the orders. Sixty-five people were brought before the mosque to be molested and then pushed into the mosque that was burned with all the people inside. That happened at the Hasan Basic-ephendy mosque in Carakovo.

"Some corpses were driven away to the mine "Tomasic" and covered up by power shovels. One hundred and sixty -five people were brought up to the new bridge "Zegar" and then compelled to jump into the River Sana to be all killed thereafter. Corpses were transported to the gravel pit at the village Baltine Bare and few days later to an unknown destination. It was said that they had been transferred to the gravel pit "Cirkin Polje" or the mine "Tomasic" or they might have been burned..." ("The...Research", Vol. 1, pgs. 82-83)

A considerable number of residents from other villages at the foot of the mountain were exiled to Carakovo. It was surrounded from all sides. Military and paramilitary units would enter the village, search houses, grab the refugees' property and take away people who never did return. The seige lasted until July 25, when the village was raided

and the villages and villagers were literally blown off the face of the earth.

Survival from the grenade attack did not guarantee freedom; it did guarantee a trip to the death camps.

We spent two months in Carakovo. Then fighting started in Carakovo. The soldiers came and took people to detention camps, and rapes occurred. Carakovo surrendered.

"Each house had to have a white flag. The soldiers could come and go as they pleased. They come every day and would take cars, tractors fuel. We were not allowed to stand in front of our house and talk. Our men had to hide. My husband was with us, but hiding. I saw my uncle being beaten on June 25 when there was a kind of massacre...Three hundred men were killed that day. Later, we tried to make a list of all the people that died that day - my father helped with this. The bodies were lying in the streets. We were not allowed to collect the bodies. I know many of the people who were killed that day..." (F.S., a 32-year-old mother of two young children. A survivor. "Helsinki Watch II", p. 81)

The same fate was assigned to the village Zecovi. All agricultural and machinery equipment was confiscated from the villagers; all cars and household furniture snatched away; all summer crops pulled from the ground.

Another survivor, B.N., confirmed the horror that spread through the village:

"My son Almir was forced to jump into the Sana and to swim while they were firing at him, until they killed him...My elder son was separated and put into a truck with a group of people and was taken into an unknown direction. I saw, with my own eyes, 12-15 young men being shot, and later on I could not observe them since the rest of us were ordered to lie down and not look up. Afterwards, when the bus got full of women, children and old men, we moved to the collective camp in Trnopolje. I stayed there for two days. I also saw young girls and women being taken out in the evening..." ("The...Research," Vol. 1, pgs. 74-75)

There are many who know first-hand the brutality of the crimes committed in this village. Young H.H. tells her deeply moving story:

"On July 27, 1992, I sat in the house with my grandmother, brother and mother. First, I heard the shots and then they entered the house and fired at us. Among them, I recognized I.Z., G.Z. and G.R. All this took place around 7:30 p.m.

"They wounded me in the stomach and both arms, while my brother was wounded in the right leg and left arm. I heard them asking if there was anyone alive. I didn't utter a word. They fired once more again at us. Then, they got out and ordered to burn the houses.

"I and my wounded brother moved to another room. We stayed in the house over the night. We heard shots during the night. In the morning we cleaned blood and when I set out to wash myself, I saw my mother and grandmother dead. I was afraid to get out. Together with my brother I moved through the village of Redak and then proceeded to Carakovo...from there we were transferred to the hospital in Prijedor where we stayed for two months for medical treatment. When we got out the hospital, the nurse R., a Serbian, helped us to reach our grandfather and there we met our father and we came together to Travnik." ("The...Research," Vol. 1, pgs. 75-76)

The horror was far from over for the tiny villages across Bosnia-Herzegovina. After the village of Hambarin was burnt, people moved on to Rizvanovici and Rakovcani, which were attacked on July 20, 1992. There were scores of exiled families living there. Many soldiers in various uniforms arrived in the village that day. They came by tanks, trucks or with their own cars. Upon entering the village, they immediately began murdering and plundering the village and villagers. Then they set it on fire.

"Everything happened on July 20 - killing, burning. I was not hurt. Quite a few women were killed. They were harassed and shot. We left; we did not know where to go. There were dead people lying along the road," said one woman who, along with her 18-month-old daughter, survived the ordeal.

"They set out to our villages. We were told to stay at home and that nothing would happen to us. We believed them, since no-one was killed in Ljubija. They surrounded our village, and murdering of innocent civilian population started. Some elderly people were taken to a camp while the others were killed straight away. Younger people were all murdered. When I saw my neighbour and his three sons killed, I ran into the cornfield wherefrom I watched the massacre.

"They came to my house, took my wife and children out and killed them all...I went into the woods where I found some more people who encountered the same fate. One day, they rounded and captured us. I knew one of them, named M. He did protect me.

"They ordered me to dig a large hole. While I was digging, the others were beaten. Some were already dead and the others were

stabbed by bayonets. I cannot describe those screams...When I noticed them off their guard, I ran away. I wandered through the woods and valleys where I found my brother and his son. Another man with his five sons joined us. When hungry, we would take potatoes out of a garden and cook them when it was foggy, so as to avoid being discovered by smoke...But, we were captured again and once again watched atrocious torturing.

"The hardest of all was the so-called head chipping. They would put a man's head on a tree stump and would chip the head like a carpenter chiselling until the whole brain leaked out." ("The...Research," Vol. 1, p. 76)

The tiny village of Biscani also passed through its darkest days. After the shelling, military and paramilitary formations entered, committing merciless atrocities along the way. The witnesses of the victims of the mass crimes were most often the children, who watched the brutal executions of their parents, siblings and playmates.

"There were much more children than the grown-ups. I think that was the reason that we may have stayed alive. Still, neither they could have killed so many children. They had no heart for that.

"I and my five-year-old son watched them beating and killing my husband. Later on, my son kept asking when the father would come back home. I don't know if he understood what had happened to his father. He often wakes up at night and asks for his father to sleep next to him. He was very close to him. I don't know what to do any further; after all that has happened to us. I have to live because of this child. I know nothing about my other family. I don't know if they are dead or alive." (A 23-year-old survivor; NSU independant interview; Croatia, Resnik, January 24, 1993)

J.K., who was an inmate of the camp "Keraterm" collected corpses in the village around Prijedor. He told American journalist R. Gutman that he had found the corpses of countless toddlers in burnt-out houses. According to his statement, he, with fellow inmates, had collected between 250 to 300 corpses of men and women from only a few of the surrounding villages.

The remains were driven to an unknown destination.

"We gathered the corpses in the village of Tukovi and afterwards proceeded to villages Sredci, Biscani, Zecovi and Caracavo. The bodies of the killed were found in front of the houses or inside, while many were behind the houses. We had found numerous bodies of children, being only two years old, and interred them behind the

houses. The majority of corpses was in Biscani, Zecovi and Cerakavo. Corpses were already full of worms and those that started decomposing were collected in three ways into five piles. Following the collecting, a chemist in a military uniform came and sprayed the corpses with a white liquid and set them on fire." (See: R. Gutman, pgs. 84 and 86)

According to the same source, one witness claimed that his wife, mother and sister were raped in front of him while he could only helplessly watch. His two sons, aged six and eight were murdered afterwards.

The wave of terror engulfed Banja Luka, Bosanka Krupa, Bihac, Kljuk, Sanski Most, Sanica, Kotor Varos, Skender Vakuf, Travnik and anywhere else the aggressors believed it was necessary to create an ethnically cleansed territory.

Thousands upon thousands of people were expelled daily from Banja Luka, one of the oldest, most beautiful towns in Bosnia-Herzegovina. By now, all Bosnians had been deprived of the right to work and all had been dispossessed of their flats or their houses. Day-to-day searching, abuse, threats and nocturnal visits from the paramilitary groups left the Bosnians uncertain that they would ever be able to have a future.

All of the mosques in Banja Luka have been destroyed, many dating back more than 400 years to the days of the Ottoman Empire. All religious and cultural heritage have been eliminated. A State-run emigration office was set up in Banja Luka which charged the terrorized population between 400 and 500 German Deustchmarks for "emigration approval" in return for a statement which confirmed that all real estate was left to the new local authorities.

Each day, the number of those applying for emigration approval increased.

Of the 58,000 Muslims and Croats living in Banja Luka, only a few thousand remain today. Those still there live under extremely difficult conditions. The expulsion from Banja Luka, disguised as mass emigration, was allegedly requested by women and children. The population, forced into cattle wagons, were dragged from their beds in the dead of the night. They carried small bundles and frightened, tearful children in their arms as they were deported to the camps.

"There was not food, no water and no fresh air...There was no toilet, just holes in the floor, piled high with excrement. An unknown number of people, particularly children and the aged, have died in the deportations." (R. Gutman, P. 36)

The hardest thing to accept was that the people who were forced to leave their native town had no solidarity from their neighbours. Banja Luka was known across the former Yugoslavia for its close-knit community of neighbourhoods. Now it will be remembered as a place of terror and shame. Even the propagators of the monstrous crimes have left the town. Even for them, the death of Banja Luka became too hard and painful.

The village of Balagaj used to be along the road between Bosanski Novi and Prijedor. It no longer exists, having been demolished and burnt. Its villagers are gone. It has been said that new people were brought in, and forced to live there.

On May 11, 1992, the population of the town took shelter in the nearby forest when the shelling of the undefended village began. In huddled masses, the children spent a rainy night in the forest. Touch was the only comfort their mothers could give. Lullabies or talking could give away their position to the enemy.

By mid-June, 1992, about 250 people from this village had been taken away. Children were separated from their parents and deported towards Travnik, territory controlled by the Bosnian army. Men were relocated to a different camp, in Bosanski Novi.

The devastating forces of fascism, chauvinism and apartheid viciously attacked Biljani, in the municipality of Sanski Most. The tragic events from this part of the country are recounted through a letter written by one survivor to a friend.

"The first raid on our village was launched June 1, 1992. Hamdo Cehic was killed then and many were taken to Manjaca. Somehow, I succeeded in escaping to a forest and that saved my life. Few days later, M.S., the history teacher, arrived at the village and told us not to worry, there would be no more raids, that the people who had been taken away would return soon, that they were taken away for questioning only. Those who remained would have to go the police station would have to go to the police station for a kind of check-up and that everything would be all right. However, he came to see who else had stayed in the village. Next, on June 26, another raid was made and six people were killed in Jabukovac and Biljani: Tehvid Omanovic, Asim Omanovic, Paso Omanovic, Sabit Sljivar, Hasib Mujezinovic and Bido. Behind the house of Osmo Hodzic, Bido and Tehvid Omanovic were killed, by who, I don't know, but there are people who do know and we shall, may God help us, find that out one day. I spent the whole day

covered up by compost near the stable. My son covered me up and that's how I stayed alive.

After that, there was some kind of a lull. They told the people not to be frightened, that nothing would happen to them. There were even introduced two bus departures a day, but the Muslims had to obtain the permission for free moving at the local community. People got released and relaxed. Then comes July 10, the day of the bloodshed in Biljani.

At 5:30 a.m., they rounded our villages, brought all the men to the elementary school in Biljani and women and children before the grocer's shop. No man had been spared on that day. Everyone who was arrested, was also killed. My village was set on fire. It means 35 houses and a mosque. If only they didn't kill the people. When all the men were brought to the school, at around 10:30 a.m., women and children were released home but threatened not to leave the house since might be killed otherwise.

People who came to our village were mostly our neighbours from Samaradzije, Sanica, Pistanica, Loncari..., few of them from Kljuc. Personally, I haven't seen any of them since I was at my cousin's. Early in the morning, my son woke me up and told me: "Daddy, here's the army, run!" I jumped out of the window, into the garden behind the house where I stayed hidden the whole day. I heard everything. I heard people crying, heard them barking as dogs, but I didn't see anything. I didn't even dare breathe aloud since everything was close to the road. As related by wife and children and other women who saw them, there were S.M., P.M. (sanitary technician), P.M. (teacher), P.N., S.R. (bus driver), Z.N. (merchant), T. (head of the police station), C. from Sanica, I don't know his name, R. (postman), V. (merchant) and his sons, B.R., with his sons; predominantly reputable and well-known people.

In the school, M.P. grabbed from my neighbour Vehbija Batonic, a bag with medicines and insulin ampules. M.P. told him that he no longer needed the bag and that he, M.P., needed those medicines to treat his people. Vehbija was murdered near the school, behind the stable of Sulejman Cehic. Women saw his body there. A number of people was taken near the mosque and killed there. Another group was murdered behind the house of Dzaferagic while Dalka's family was killed in the garden behind the house. There, two women found a nylon bag of Semsal's wife and children, containing two pairs of children's pants, diapers, biscuits and flips. All that remained of Leila's small daughter was a strand of hair and shoes. R.S. said that he had

seen Dalka's family dead and that they had been killed by B.D., the son of M., who is the cousin of B.M.

B.M. was also in Biljani that day. Two buses full of people were driven away to an unknown direction. Some were shot some 50 metres away from the school. They said: "There's too many of you here," and shot them. A young man from Brkici, Cajin Husein, stayed alive. He said night had fallen before they started shooting. When the night came, he crawled out from under the dead and went home. According to him, there were killed: Hodzic Rufad, Zukanovic Mujo, Avidv Alija and many others. My Enes had been there for sure, but he didn't want to tell me that directly. That young man is in Travnik now; he managed to escape after V. (a Serbian) kept him hidden for some time and obtained him an affidavit that he had been under arrest.

Killing lasted until 3:00 p.m. Then they scattered and there was less firing... Towards evening, at 6:00 p.m., a commotion could be heard and trucks arrived to the village. Women and children were once again thrown out of the houses and all shoved into one house. Women who walked in direction of that house said that they saw a truck and a bulldozer. In the truck, there was M.S., who got off the truck and told the driver: "Come on, free terrain!" They went to the village, collected all of the dead into the truck and drove them away, it is said, to Krasulje, into a valley. But, everything will be found out.

So, having collected the dead, even those who butchered and killed, they left. Only four of them, our neighbours from Biljani, remained till 11:00 p.m. in the house where the women and children stayed, allegedly to guard them. Afterwards, women recalled that in the morning, when they went back home, the entire road was blood-stained and that they had to walk down the trench along the road. Women and children whose houses were burnt down situated themselves in the remnants of the houses that had not been completely burnt and persisted, somehow. Then the plundering started. They kept on coming, every day, looking for gold, money, currency. They took everything: furniture...even the heaters and toilet bowls were dismantled. There most often came B., from Sanica, J. called Z. and a G. They were regular visitors to our village. When I came back to the house in the morning, there were 17 women and children and they all started to cry. I was told to run away since in case they notice me, they (the women and children) would all be killed. Women and children had nothing to eat for four days. It was agonizing to look at it all and to endure it."

The same fate was in store for the villages near Sanski Most. Local citizens tried to organize resistance, but, after five days of continuous shelling, the villages were completely ruined and burned down. The majority of the population ran into the nearby forests. Those who stayed at home were executed. According to the witness M.M.: "A tractor was fully loaded with the family Kadirici; they were brought up to the bridge, leaned on the fence and stabbed...Rezak Selesvich and Reuf Pobric were shot leaned against the wall." ("The Centre...", p. 56)

All men from Gronja Sanica were either killed or deported to the camp Manjaca. Women and children who stayed in the village were deported to Central Bosnia, which was by this time in the control of the Bosnian Army. The convoys of exiled women and children were robbed on the way. Many were killed and numerous women raped.

In the municipality of Kljuc, prior to the beginning of ethnic cleansing, the percentage of the population of Bosnians and Serbs was almost equal. However, expulsion and mass execution of the Bosnian population soon changed these figures dramatically. In early October, 1993, the new local civilian and military authorities gave more than 4,000 Bosnians 24 hours to leave the town.

Vecici, a small village near Kotor Varos, also encountered the same tragic fate which was beginning to become all too common in the district. For five months, this village resisted the assaults of the army and paramilitary groups. During the retreat towards Travnik, countless women and children were killed. Out of 1,150 inhabitants of this village, only a few hundred survived.

Withdrawing under the incessant fire of cannons and tanks, surrounded on all sides by paramilitary groups, the inhabitants of this small mountain village were forced to leave their dead and wounded along the roadside. On this retreat, more than 200 people were killed, most of them children. Moving through minefields, swimming across swift mountain rivers, hiding in the wilderness eating only roots and grass, only 100 people managed to reach Travnik. A group of people from this village was caught near the village of Grbavica, not far from Skender Vakuf, where the prisoners were exposed to the most abhorrent persecution methods in the local post office. (See: R. Gutman, p. 131)

In the middle of October, 1992, under the open sky and encircled by machine gun nests, 6,500 women, children and elderly men were imprisoned in the collective centre near Kotor Varos. They hoped to

be deported to Middle Bosnia or western European countries. It would be the only way to escape certain death.

(See: "The New Yorker," October, 20, 1992)

There are abundant newspaper reports on the existence of numerous common graveyards on the north hillside of the mountain Vlasic. Convoys of refugees from Bosanka Krajina were relentlessly looted on their way to Middle Bosnia. A considerable number of children died due to the shortage of food, water and medicine. Children were transported under conditions which would terrify even the strongest adult. With the temperature above 30 degrees Celsius, children rode in overcrowded buses and trucks, closed in on all sides. Scores of children did not survive this "Hell Road" due to the lack of oxygen and excessive heat. Parents arrived with dead children in their arms. The elderly in wheelchairs died and were abandoned along the side of the road like broken bicycles.

Convoys were continuously exposed to the assaults of paramilitary groups moving in that district. The refugees were deprived of their valuable possessions: money, jewellery and clothes. Many women were raped along the way. Hoards of people were killed. Many were slashed, while others were pushed from high rocks. According to foreign news reports, between 150 and 200 inmates out of the convoy that moved on August 21, 1992, from the camp Trnopolje towards Travnik, were executed on this mountain. (Stats from "The Washington Post," October 11, 1992; September 22, 1993; September 28, 1992)

"After the women and children were taken away, about 250 men remained. We (men) were (then) taken in the direction of Travnik in four buses. When we got to Kozarac, we waited for another convoy to come from Prijedor. (While we waited,) they robbed us - they took our gold and our German Marks...We then went toward Banja Luka to Skender Vakuf and stopped en route to get some water. After we passed Skender Vakuf, we drove toward Travnik, but we got off the main road and onto a side road. We stopped again for about 15 minutes and got some water from a river. We got on the buses again and turned to leave. Then our escort got on the bus and said: "Whoever I call is to get off the bus." Then he started pointing at people saying: "You, you and you - get out." We were made to line up along the bus. About 200 to 250 men had been taken from the buses...We had to keep looking at the floor and couldn't see how many soldiers were present. They told us to line up along the wall of the cliff. They made us perform military movements...and told us to go to the other side of the road -

to the edge of the ravine - where they told us to kneel and bow our heads. I heard shots and saw people falling off the side of the cliff, so I jumped into the ravine. I fell about 20 metres and, as I rolled down, I saw the periphery of a forest so I ran into the trees. I walked downward, toward a creek, before I looked up to see what was going on. Some of the men didn't jump into the ravine but waited for a bullet to be shot into them.

"I waited in my (hiding) spot until nightfall. Then I climbed up to see the dead. (In addition to these that had been executed that same day), there were old corpses there as well. They were swollen, many were black and the bodies were rotting and the smell was bad. There were many corpses, but probably fewer than 200. (See: "Helsinki Watch II", pgs. 36-42)

This mountain was crossed by more than 40,000 refugees during the time of intense fighting.

The town of Travnik, home of Nobel Prize winner Ivo Andric, encountered even more tragedy as relations broke down between the Bosnians and Croats. The arrival of more than 18,000 refugees from Bosanska Krajina entirely paralysed the living conditions in this town. There was no electricity, no water, no food, no medicine. Children died in masses from infection and starvation. Under steady bombing, the typhus epidemic spread, threatening to entirely shatter the town. Refugees who were robbed during deportation had neither clothing nor footwear so that a great many of them fell victims of the cold.

"Winter is coming. We have no clothes, only what we are wearing. They have stolen everything. We had been quite well off. Here we are beggars. We stand in line for food." (A refugee identified as Aga; see R Gutman, p. 135)

5. CRYING FOR MOSTAR

"What happened with Mostar, with Herzegovina, that used to be a gem, a sunny gem, where dog-rose berries, grapes, figs and apricots, understand, where all that had the same smell for everyone - for the Serbs, for the Muslims and for the Croats?

Herzegovina was a real, I would almost say an invented region from the Moon, where those people yet always tolerated each other, over centuries...Imagine Mostar, the most poetical town in the world. Mostar, the town of Osman Djikic...That our Mostar, I think, is the only town loved by all and sundry; I think that there is no poet, a real poet from the former Yugoslavia within "AVNOJ" boundaries who were not

coming to Mostar as if to his own house, known to himself only. We all rejoiced, and every one of us real poets with pure human heart, had had his stone in Mostar. His stone in that symbol of Mostar, the old bridge on the river Neretva, his dog-rose berries, his figs, his vineyards 'round Mostar...And only that sunny Mostar's white heat! The Mediterranean pressed Mostar with its rays, there was its real house...And think of Mostar's water-hens, so-called coots! Wonderful people, painters Meha Safic, Ico Voljevic, Niksic...What people! I have their paintings, even photos. It's incomprehensible. Presently I see, look, but I don't believe. It seems to me all hazy now, as if I am dreaming before the television! I see them wrecking Mostar, demolishing that magnificent house, firing from the other bank of the Neretva...How could they only watch the shattering of that splendid, divine department store where they may have bought the first shoes, the first clothes for their child, the first diapers for their newborn baby?! How come they don't feel ashamed of themselves? How come their hand didn't quiver at demolishing that Mostar?...How to meet with them tomorrow? With Dijana Burazer? With Slija Kebo? With Misa Maric? With remarkable Mostar's poets and painters; with Vlada Puljic, a glorious painter of Herzegovina and a Herzegovina's poet? How to look Vlada Puljic in the eye?...Those barbarians who crashed my house, one, then the other one, smashed my windows, shot at me...I would forgive them everything if only they didn't touch Mostar, Dubrovnik, Sarajevo...That I cannot forgive them."

(Written by a well-known Montenegrin poet, Jevrem Brkovic, on the destruction of Mostar)

Poets' impressions on Mostar, the town of poets and flowers; impressions on the town that had the misfortune to be twice destroyed within one year by two different aggressors are touching. This old town of bridges, the town on which, in the old days, the merchants of Asia and Dubrovnik met to sell their wares; the town with its old historical monuments today is a ruin. The cultural and national inheritance of the Bosnians has been either completely destroyed or seriously damaged. It is the first time in the long history of Mostar that all its bridges have been blown up. The bridges that for centuries connected people, cultures and civilizations; that connected the Balkans with the Mediterranean are gone. Even the grandest, the Old Bridge, the symbol of this Mediterranean town, has been virtually erased from history.

Besides the destruction of Mostar, the inhabitants of this town were exposed to heinous crimes. In the outlying settlement Sutina, a

mass execution place has been discovered. It has been said that the execution place, located close to the Mostar-Sarajevo road looked like a mound of earth levelled to the ground and trodden on the by the bulldozer's caterpillars. And maybe no-one would have even hinted that it was a common grave site were it not for the parts of human bodies protruding out of that "Mound of Atrocities." How many of those unfortunate people will remain under that mound forever? How many had met their Creator at the bottom of the deep Herzegovinan caves and at other execution places? (See: "Novi Vejesnik", June 26, 1992, Zagreb)

The innocent children of Mostar were also killed or banished. On April 6, 1992, tanks and cannonfire began over the town. Pandemonium ensued. All those who were able to, ran out of the town. They left their homes - ran before the deranged policies of apartheid, segregation, chauvinism and hatred could claim them.

During the day, the town was showered by shells and bombs and at night, the snipers' red laser death rays wandered over the sleepy facades of Mostar, searching for victims. People relocated, exiled themselves from one part of the town to another, abandoning their belongings as well as their hopes, dreams and memories. On May 11, 1993, 700 apartments were set ablaze in the Boulevard. Eighteen hundred people were sent to damp cellars where they heard the ominous whirring of tanks' grenades. Families were torn asunder. The town was divided. Even the sky above Mostar seems parted - Mostar's rains are no longer what they used to be. The heaven-sent droplets of life must now share their space with the rain of gunfire which seems to never really end.

The souls of those caught in the crossfire of the lasers roam the windy Mostar sky with the crows, in search of peaceful place to rest.

SARAJEVO - THE TOWN OF THE OLYMPICS AND THE TOWN OF DEATH

We slowed down at the bridge,
And watched the dogs on the Miljacka bank
Tearing apart a human corpse in the snow.
Then, we moved away.
Nothing has changed in me...
I listened to the snow, creaking under the tires,
Like teeth grating an apple...
And I had a wild wish to laugh at you
For calling this place a hell.
And you run away from here,
Assured that there is no death outside Sarajevo.

Semezdin Mehmedinovic

Sarajevo is the Capital City of Bosnia-Herzegovina. It is one of the oldest urban centres in the Balkans, where a myriad of civilizations have met over the centuries. Each civilization has left its trace on the people of this city; on its wide boulevards; its narrow, slanting alleyways with wooden staircases; on its buildings - mosques, churches, cathedrals and synagogues. This grand, Olympic city was a place of peace, harmony and hope only a few years ago.

How long ago it all seems today.

Perhaps it was because this city was the symbol of togetherness that the new regime felt compelled to attack it with such venom. The most valuable cultural treasures of the Bosnian people have been destroyed or damaged. Neither the National nor the university library was spared, destroying centuries-old artifacts including the "Sarajevo Haggadah", one of the oldest preserved Jewish manuscripts in the Balkans. The Town Hall, the railway station and the Olympic Village, which only a decade before housed athletes from around the world, were destroyed.

The Olympic soccer field is now a massive common grave.

But the shells and bullets and bombs which destroyed the artifacts and claimed so many lives could not, in the early days of the conflict, destroy the spirit of the people of Sarajevo. Citizens, regardless of their religion or ethnicity, stood up to defend their city. Each building,

boulevard, alley, bridge and street was guarded. But the residents of Sarajevo were protecting much more than brick and mortar, they were protecting the futures they had planned.

Many would never see the future. More than 2,130 children died in defense of their city. The tiny mounds will forever remain to remind the rest of the world what apartheid and hatred can do.

The victims in Sarajevo, which rapidly became the biggest death camp in Europe, died from bombs and from sniper fire, but also from the cold, hunger and common diseases which modern medicine found cures for decades ago.

The eyes of the world were glued once again to their television sets to see the events in Sarajevo, but it was unlike a decade before. Now children died on the screen. Buildings were burning with their owners still inside. And the same people who rushed home a decade before to tune into Sarajevo now rushed to turn off their sets.

It simply became too painful for the world to watch.

The children in Sarajevo have lived without water or electricity since May 29, 1992, when the water pipes were severed and the overhead power lines were cut. Since that day, there have been no baths before bedtime; no favourite cartoons. For their protection, families lived in dark cellars, listening to the whizzing of tanks and the echo of bombing over their heads. Typhus, dysentery, coughs and diseases spread like wildfire through the cellars. With little or no medicine, there was no way to stop the diseases and many died from lack of antibiotics.

But despite the hardships, the children were able to continue their educations in the makeshift, underground classrooms. For each classmate lost, a flower would be placed on his or her desk in memory and then the day would continue as usual.

Sarajevo was under siege as of April 4, 1992, when the first fighting started in the streets. Close to 300,000 people had already left the city while another 300,000 remained. Three hundred thousand people - mostly women and children - have lived for more than two years without water, electricity, heating or medical help. During the most intense fighting, they were exposed to shelling launched from the surrounding hills and the exacting aim of the snipers. Hospitals, schools, nurseries and maternity wards were not spared. People died from hunger on the streets, searching in vain for food.

On April 6, the Muslim section of the city was bombed and April 10, the television transmitter was destroyed. In the days following the

U.N. special delegate Cyrus Vance's departure on April 16, the Serbs stepped up their offensive and the attacks seemed to have new intensity.

By mid-May, the victims could no longer be accounted for. Hundreds of bodies lay dead in the street. They could not be retrieved or buried because of the unrelenting shelling and sniper fire. The European Community and the United Nations withdrew all of their personnel from Sarajevo; foreign workers were ordered home. Consulates were closed. Only the Bosnian people remained.

On May 27, more than 20 people were killed in the centre of town as they queued for bread. Some 70 more were severely wounded. The town was in flames from the bombings - houses and apartments were set ablaze and the very core of the town was on fire. Each day the number of dead was expressed in three-digit figures, creeping higher, it seemed, every day. Convoys of aid from the International Red Cross and the United Nations were attacked while trying to bring supplies into the city. Eventually, aid was cut off to protect the peacekeepers who had been dispatched to the area and the suffering and starvation continued.

As the summer of 1992 heated up, so did the fighting. The temperature, which often exceeded 35 degrees Celcius, seemed even hotter due to the smouldering ruins which were everywhere. Children died daily from thirst and dehydration. There seemed to be little anyone could do.

On August 1, a large convoy of infants and children attempted to leave the city when it suddenly came under intense fire from the surrounding hills. A considerable number of those children will remain on that road forever. That convoy never did break through the lines, nor did the bus filled with more wounded children which tried again the following day. On August 6, 300 people were exiled into the Sarajevo Hell from neighbouring villages. Even patients from the local sanatorium were released into the streets where they were forced to look after themselves.

On and on the fighting went, into the Fall, when a grenade fired from the mountains landed directly on top of children playing in the street. Three died instantly while ten more were severely wounded. The victim count for the day totalled 43 dead and 194 wounded.

"The sniper I knew was a child. He saw me clearly and he shot me anyway. I ran and he kept shooting at me and when I fell down, he

tried to shoot me again." (Seven-year-old Ivana from Sarajevo; See: "Unicef, Emergency Operations in the Former Yugoslavia", 1994)

With the onset of winter, Sarajevo found another enemy, no less deadly than the Serbs. The severe cold, with temperatures often dropping well below 20 degrees Celcius, compelled the citizens to cut down all the trees in town, burn their furniture and set the last book in their libraries on fire. "White Death" began to claim its many victims and this silent killer was no less discriminating. Children were often the easiest to take, their tiny bodies unable to cope with the cold. There was no heat and no blankets or warm clothing could be found anywhere in the city.

The city was chained in ice and human cruelty.

Part Three CHILDREN IN CONCENTRATION CAMPS

1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Concentration camps in Bosnia were a direct result of the policy of ethnic cleansing throughout the region. Those created in Bosnia-Herzegovina differ from the Nazi camps of half a century ago in that they were created during a military coup, not by an elected, ruling government which could be held accountable for their crimes. However, it is also important to remember that those who organized these camps and carried out the death sentences believed this was the only way to create a generic race of people - that those who did not fit the mold had to be eliminated. As such, the purpose of these camps was not to isolate the internees but to exterminate them, particularly the intellectuals whom those now in control most fear. In that respect, the Bosnian concentration camps are very much like those created by the Nazis during the Second World War. The functioning and existence of these camps took place while the very organization brought in to keep the peace denied their existence.

The majority of these camps were (or are) located near abandoned mine shafts or beside rivers for the sole purpose of the easy disposal of the dead. According to Helsinki Watch, "...reports by the independent foreign media and U.N. documents provide, at the very least, prima-

facia evidence that Serbian-operated camps in Northern Bosnia are being used to detain, torture and, possibly execute non-Serbs." ("Hel-sinki Watch I", p. 65)

The existence of these camps has been confirmed by independent sources as well. American freelance journalist Roy Gutman was the first to imply the existence of hidden "places of horror" in a Newsday article on July 19, 1992. The same suspicion was confirmed by U.N. observers in the Washington Post a few weeks later, on August 6.

The greatest numbers passing through these "collective centres" (as they were officially called) were women, children and the elderly. They had already been exposed to many forms of torture and abuse, but the worst was clearly yet to come for these people. It is difficult to presume exactly what took place in these centres as access was impossible during the earliest days of their creation. It was not until foreign journalists and the United Nations discovered their existence that the doors were opened for the world to see. However, this attempt at "damage control" did not give accurate accounts of life for the internees as a sanitized version of the goings-on was presented to the world.

But conversations with survivors tell the truest tales of terror and intimidation in these camps which were created anywhere and everywhere - in schools, offices and sports arenas, in military structures and, most frequently, in mosques. Entire villages were turned into "Muslim ghettos" where detainees were horribly tormented. Among the most infamous of these were Trnoplje near Prijedor and Brezovo Polje near Brcko.

Most of these collective centres were located in regions controlled by the Serbian military forces. There is no evidence that mass executions were carried out at the hands of the Bosnian resistance in the detention centres they operated.

In Sarajevo and its suburbs, in the first stage of the war, there were 29 known collective centres in operation. It is widely accepted that some 150,000 women and children passed through the gates. Some, perhaps the lucky ones, were killed immediately, while the overwhelming majority was transferred from camp to camp, discovering new forms of torture at each one. And still another group was used for prisoner exchange.

Citizens were wrested from their homes, schools and shops; pulled from their beds and taken to the interrogation centres and collection centres. Those who did not make it to these centres were found dead in their homes or in the street.

During the "investigation phase", special interrogation bodies and military court martials, under direct control of the rebels' highest political and military authorities, were formed. During these "court" proceedings, there was no respect for the law: There were no rights for the accused and there no allowances to defend oneself. Court authorities, doubling as investigation officers, primarily relied upon official Party Programmes when judging "trials". Military court-martials frequently recommended immediate execution upon judgment.

Inmates were killed at the discrimination of the camp interrogators at any and every level of "investigation". The stroke of a pen beside an inmate's name and their fate was forever sealed. According to survivors' allegations, guards were free to enter the sleeping quarters of internees at all hours of the day or night to rape, otherwise torture or execute their victims at their leisure.

2. SUFFERING IN CONCENTRATION CAMPS

Camps in the basin of the River Drina were instituted right after the assault on Bosnia and Hercegovina began. Most of these camps were located right along the banks, for easy disposal of the dead. It was a common sight, during this time, to see decomposing corpses floating down the river.

According to some reports, in the first stages of the conflict, about 11,000 people were detained in the camps in the municipality of Zvornik. In Vlasenica, in the camp Susica, another 3,000 people were interned. More than 10,000 people were deported into camps in Visegrad, Rogatic and Foca, where more than 3,000 people were killed. And while the circumstances happening in the cities and towns indicate far more casualties, these numbers are the only ones which could be confirmed by independent sources. As stated by E.A. from Bratunac, severe crimes were committed in "Vuk Karadzic" elementary school, which initially served as a collective centre in this town.

More than 100 lives were lost in the first three nights at the "Vuk Karadzic" camp.

"The brought in Medo Delic, my colleague, and his two sons. His younger son suffered from epilepsy. He begged them not to hit him because he was sick. One of the soldiers shot him in the head and said "Now he won't be sick anymore.' Then the soldier shot his elder son and then him." (Independent interview NSU, January, 1993)

R.H. also witnessed serious crimes. "They brought the Imam Mustafa Mujakanovic from Suha, near Bratunac, before us (600 inma-

tes). They beat him...they beat him again and then pierced his neck. He fainted. He was stabbed with a knife twice more and then he passed away. They proceeded with beating and killing us, there in the hall, following some lists. We were deprived of all valuable things, money, gold. They separated children from their parents who knew nothing further about their destiny. All the documents that had been snatched from us were set on fire. Over 300 people were killed then."

And T.D., a villager from Dražina near Zvornik, also witnessed horrendous crimes against humanity when the population from the village of Kostjerevo was brought into the Civic Centre and males and females were separated. Massive numbers of the men were shot. Ten 14 or 15-year-old boys were taken in the direction of Zvornik and were never heard from again. On May 31, according to the same witness, 150 men and women were taken away to be allegedly exchanged for prisoners captured on the front. The witness could not confirm if or where the exchange had been made. (Independent interview, January, 1993)

"From June 1-10, I was confined in the concentration camp in Karakaj, located in the building of the Technical Education Centre. There were about 700 inmates from the villages Sestici, Klisa, Djulici, Sjenokos, Kaludrani, Celismani, Lupe, Bileli Potok...All the time, the camp's authorities enforced unbearable terror. We were situated in narrow rooms, without sufficient air and water. They beat us with hands, butt-ends and lathes. People were full of bleeding wounds and many died consequently. We were ordered to load the corpses into trucks and then they were driven away to an unknown destination.

"The rooms were stuffy and warm. More than 20 people got suffocated. Among them there was also Hrustan Avdic, the Headmaster of the elementary school in Petkovci. People were taken out in groups and shot...The turn came for my group. Beside me, there were Nurija Jasarevic and Avdo Jasarevic from the village of Klis; Sejdo Hasanovic Muradif Hasovic, Asim Mamzic, Smajo Smajlovic, Ramiz Sinanovic and Osman Smajlovic, all from the village of Sestici. They placed us against the wall and shot. It was an exceptional miracle that I stayed alive, keeping quiet among my murdered neighbours. When they left to fetch another group of detainees, I crawled away from the execution place...Before I left the camp, about 400 people were killed." (N.N.; "I. Kajan, pgs. 38-39)

Foca, a small town in Bosnia Hercegovina, has a predominantly Muslim population and is one of the oldest towns in the nation. A town

where East and West once crossed; where the trading caravans of merchants from Venice, Dubrovnik, Austria, Hungary and Turkey met, Foca used to be a town of harmony. Nevertheless, the events which took place in this town virtually negate centuries of peace and has turned the town to a place of hatred and violence. All historical monuments and ecclesiastical edifices to the Islamic culture have been destroyed and all of the houses belonging to Bosnians have been plundered, demolished and burnt to the ground.

The "Partizan" sports hall in Foca was converted into one of the infamous collection centres where several vicious acts were committed. There was also a centre at the police station. At first, it the Centre was run as a place where women and children were detained, but it quickly became one of the most notorious raping centres across Bosnia. There were other "Rape Centres" in Foca: a camp in Velacevo was also set up in a former penitentiary, where scores of young women were taken against their will and were sexually assaulted. Some were raped as many as 100 times in two months. Among the victims were countless teenaged girls who were raped several times a day. M.C. declared to a journalist that on June 3, 1992, together with about 50 other women, she was taken to the workers' barracks "Buk Bileji" where gang rapes were organized. From there, they were brought to the school's classrooms and then to the "Partizan" hall where the rapes continued. "They always took the youngest women and teenaged girls. I was raped 150 times during my two-month stay in the camps for raping in Foca," said M.C., a survivor.

"We were taken to the cafeteria to eat and then back up to the classroom. Some of us were taken to another room. They would take four to five women at a time from the classroom. On one occasion, four soldiers took three other women and me to the other room. Each of the soldiers raped one of us. They then left, and four other come and raped us. Then another four came and did the same thing. At one point, one of the men raping me was J.V. - he was an acquaintance. I started to protest and resist, but the men who were raping the other three women in the room started to curse me and call me an Ustasa. These three men demanded that I take off my clothes, and then they raped me.

"I was taken back to the classroom, but another man come and took me away and raped me again. There were other women from my village in the room and they, too, were being raped by men. All of the women who were taken from the classroom were later returned. This type of

scenario occurred every night. I was held in the high school for 10 days, and every day I was raped. Some of the men who had come to take us away and then rape us were familiar to me; others I had never seen before." (S.M.; Helsinki Watch II, pgs. 247-248)

Children stayed with their mothers at "Partizan" and often were witnesses to the systematic rapes of their mothers. Others were left alone while their mothers were being assaulted.

"There were about 72 people who were being held in the "Partizan" sports hall at the time of my detention. There were about four elderly persons and the rest were all women and children. They took the women out of the hall and brought us to abandoned Muslim houses. This time I did not resist. They would make us laugh before they raped us. If we didn't laugh, they threatened to kill us. Not all women were taken from the hall, but some who were taken were never returned. Four women were taken from the hall, allegedly because they were to participate in some type of negotiations, but I never saw them again." (Helsinki Watch II, pgs. 249-250)

The evidence shows that these brothels contained many girls between 14 and 16 years of age. As stated by witnesses, rapes were most often performed by the members of military and paramilitary groups, although it was certainly not rare to see non-uniformed men participating as well.

And at the mens' prison in Foca, where between 560 and 700 men were deported, men of all ages were subjected to all forms of ferocious torture. At night, prison guardsmen would enter the cells where the inmates were confined and would call out to some of them and take them away. Some returned badly beaten while others never returned. It was supposed by many that the numerous corpses floating down the River Drina could be the bodies of murdered detainees from Foca.

3. BRUTAL KILLINGS IN BRCKO.

From the town of Brcko, located in the River Sava's basin, arrived the news of morbid crimes. There were several collective centres in the town, the most notorious among them being the one located near the pier called "Luka". From May through July, 1992, more than 3,000 people were viciously murdered there. Initially, their bodies were tossed into the river, but later on guards drove the bodies to a neighbouring village where they were thrown into common graves. Inmates were routinely mutilated in this camp, with castration being the most common form of torture for the men. One inmate claims to have seen

10 butchered young men with their ears, noses and genitals cut off. "It was the most vicious sight I've ever seen." (R. Gutman, p. 51) The same witness testified that somewhere between 25 and 30 inmates were killed each evening.

"One day, a man called Stjepan was brought into the hall, where about 900 inmates were accommodated, with his ears cut off. They said that he had been found wandering along the streets with his ears cut off, and after they gave vent to their lowest instincts over this miserable person, they asked him what he would like the most. His reply was: "To die like a man." They promised to fulfill his wish. They asked us to kill him. When no one of us accepted to do that, we were reprimanded, and then one of them, named R., whom I know, did it himself by shooting the man in the head before our eyes. That crime was observed by many children as well, who were deported to the camp together with their parents. Murdering was carried out usually at night, at a late hour. The members of various army and paramilitary groups would enter the camps, pass the sleepy and frightened internees and those who were kicked by the leg would be dead men. I was kicked seven times and then again, for no reason I myself could have figured out, sent back to sleep. Just before I was released from the camp, my neighbour, Avdo Karic, had been taken away during one of such roll-calls. He never came back. Majority of people was liquidated immediately upon their arrival to the camp. So, my superior Ako, from Brevoza Polje, was executed after only two-day stay in the the camp Luka. (Testimony of the witness A.T., independent interview, NSU, Harkanj, Hungary, 1993)

Members of the SDA (the Democratic Action Party, a political representative of the Bosnian people), intellectuals and the well-to-do were particularly ruthlessly murdered. Punishments for those detainees ranged from beatings, dismemberments and jumping off table-tops onto the chests of their victims to simply shooting or stabbing them to death. Their lives were at the mercy of a group of people who were completely out of control.

"There I saw, with my own eyes, the corpses, blood running in streams, massacred mothers and children with two fingers cut off. In a warehouse, I saw an immense blood pool and many tortured people in the execution line. During my stay in "Luka", 15 people were slaughtered for Bairam (the Muslim religious feast). I was slapped across the face and kicked in the stomach every day." (T.S., independent interview, NSU, November, 1992)

S.P. and C.M., two prison guards from this camp who were captured during their escape, described in minute detail the execution procedures. S.P., 22-years-old and a little stooped, has a baby-face and spoke in a quiet, tearful voice that would make one almost pity him if they did not know of his vicious war crimes against yesterday's neighbours and friends. According to his confession, he was compelled by his comrades-in-arms to perform five rapes and four murders in the camp "Luka". Also, C.M., who was a warden in this camp for 10 days, confessed to have performed as many rapes and murders as he had been ordered to. And he had been ordered, he said, to rape 12 girls, among them three 12 or 13-year-olds, and to kill 80 inmates.

"The specialists (paramilitary units) brought a group of people and told me I had to kill them. Those people were very frightened and were crying. They were all well-dressed. I recognized some of them. There were several women among them. I had to butcher three of them, and shoot the rest. I didn't look them in the eye. I stood a little aside. Just before the shooting, when they saw that death was inevitable, the people strangely calmed down. They bowed their heads, not uttering a word, and stopped crying. I fired four charges into them. I fired at those who were standing, I didn't fire at those who were on the floor. Someone might have survived (?!). ("Globus", Zagreb, September 11, 1992)

Inmates knew that when a guard would enter the room, death, for one or all, would almost surely follow. At every sound coming from the outside, the inmates would gather into a corner, cringing in fear. They would all clamour for the back of the pile, as to be among the front row would, in most cases, mean certain execution. They were taken away in groups of three.

The endless wonder of when or if they were to be killed caused a great deal of tension among the inmates. For some, the tension proved to be too great. They went insane.

Detainees were robbed daily by the local population, who would take money, clothing, jewelry - anything of value.

"Some of the people would be taken away from the warehouses. Then we would hear shooting - either volleys of gunfire or individual shots. Then a truck would come and remove the bodies. We used to watch through the sliding doors of the warehouse, which didn't close tightly and left a little space through which you could see. We also could see piles of shoes and boots which were collected from people who were let out to use the toilet. I remember a tall man from Breko

who come to Luka three times. He was looking for a gold ring and other valuables, and he took the prisoner's belongings," said Omer, a camp inmate. ("Helsinki Watch II", p. 203)

The conditions in the camp were extremely difficult. There was no food, water or medicine. The use of the toilet was allowed only during the day. At night, the inmates were forced to relieve themselves in the rooms where they slept, which created a horrible stench and increased the spread of disease to a dangerous level.

And the children were not spared this horror. Those who survived their internment will carry with them their nightmares and horrific memories with them forever. And, seemingly, even the unborn were not granted immunity.

"There were very few women and children among them: Maybe 10 women and about 10 children, up to the age of 12. I was placed in the first warehouse. There were about 200-300 Croats in the warehouse. A Jew was also among those in the warehouse...A pregnant woman named Sefka was among the prisoners. She was about four to six months pregnant, and her stomach had visibly swelled. They beat her for three days and, on the fourth day, she died. They beat her by the manhole, and they killed her father. She was beaten by police officer," said M., who survived the camp. ("Helsinki Watch II", pgs. 200-201)

4. MASS RAPE IN BREZOVO POLJE

Brezovo Polje is one of the numerous villages in Bosnia which was transformed into a ghetto for the Bosnian people during the war. The largest number of women and children from the town of Brcko were deported to this village, being only 10 kilometres away. Also, scores of women and children from Bjeljina, Foca and other places caught-up in the ethnic cleansing, were deported to this village-camp during the first stages of the war. The number rapidly decreased for a short time due to the mass executions, but soon increased as another busload of deportees was brought in to replace the dead.

"We were taken to the home of one of the local villagers in Brevozo Polje and we had to report to the military authorities every two hours. We were allowed to move about the village but could not leave. Paramilitaries and Yugoslav army restricts patrolled the village. We were not mistreated, but four to five people were taken from village every day and never returned. I spent 24 days in Brevozo Polje and every day, at least four men were taken away - that means at least 96

men disappeared and were probably killed or taken to a camp." ("Helsinki Watch I", p. 70)

In the second half of June, 1992, about 1,000 women and children were shoved into eight buses and deported towards Tuzla. In Caparde, paramilitary forces separated 40 young women and girls from their families and detained them. They were raped, in groups of 10 at a time, several times a day.

Based on a report presented by Dr. M.K., the head of the gynaecologists' team at the clinic in Tuzla to American journalist Roy Gutman, countless young women and teenaged girls, deported from Brezovo Polje, Lipnja and a few places in East Bosnia, were raped. The majority of soldiers and members of the paramilitary formations who raped these girls maintain that they were ordered to do so. A few were ashamed, and refused to follow the orders. Most rape victims were between the ages of 15 and 30, although there were deviations on either end of the spectrum. As a rule, women were raped in front of their families, surrounded by waiting soldiers. Many teenaged girls did not survive the ritual rapes.

Most girls murdered following a gang rape were killed by someone they knew - a former neighbour or schoolmate.

"My daughter (17-years-old) was strangled. We found her on the couch, with her arms at her neck. They raped her and strangled her. It was probably our neighbours who did it. She was very beautiful. She had finished primary school." (said H.F. see R. Gutman, P. 75)

These rapes were a direct attack on the family values of the Bosnian people, who hold the position of wife and mother in high regard. An overwhelming number of the raped women became pregnant and abortion was not considered an option to them due to their beliefs. One particularly tragic case is of a young woman who had her mother, father, husband and four-year-old son murdered in front of her. She was deported to the military hospital where she was a nurse during the day and a virtual sexual slave to the camp guards at night. (R. Gutman, p. 72)

The trauma of the rape victims has been recorded at clinics all over Bosnia and Herzegovina. Clinical examinations show that many of these women suffer from irreparable psychological damage, including psychosis and depression, which has left these women incapable of resuming any form of a normal life.

5. BATKOVIC: FREEZING THE PRISONERS

In Bosnia, the temperature often drops to sub-zero in the winter, in large part because of the cold winter winds. Even the hardy sparrows, which seek shelter in the eaves of buildings often do not survive. Many camp inmates froze to death on the cold, concrete floors; mostly the very old, the very young and the very ill.

With 1,300 detainees occupying an area of 1,000 square metres, each inmate had less than one square metre - less than the size of a tabletop - to call their own. The insufficient air, chronic exhaustion, constant abuse, beatings, shortage of food, and diarrhea made life in the camp unbearable. Officially, there were no mass executions in the camp, although many inmates succumbed to the injuries they received at the hands of their captors.

"Usually after it got dark in the evening, soldiers would separate the genuine PoWs - there were about five or six of them. Then they would take them outside the enclosure, and from behind the warehouse, we could hear cries and screams. The PoWs were beaten every night and the others were beaten from time to time, depending on the mood of the soldiers... These men would come back, every part of them blackened, and they would lie down. In a few hours they would be dead." ("Helsinki WatchII", p. 213)

6. DEPORTATION AND THE RAPE OF CHILDREN IN TRNOPOLJE

Trnopolje was the largest camp for women and children. It was opened in the first days of May, 1992, when ethnic cleansing in Prijedor started. Although officially it was defined as a "refugee collection centre", its organization and methods used for torture made it no different from any of the other death camps. What did make it different was the overwhelming amount of women and children detained there. The internees were situated in the classrooms of the town's elementary school, the gymnasium and several tents outside the building. The perimeter of the camp was surrounded by barbed wire fencing to prevent the inmates from escaping.

Prior to the start of ethnic cleansing in Trnopolje, some of the detainees' families were accommodated in the nearby village houses. However, when the soldiers invaded the village, robbery, rape and terrorizing ran rampant and many of the homes were burnt to the ground. The villagers attempted to run for their lives, but the city was

surrounded from all sides by the military, thus making any form of retreat virtually impossible. Eventually, the village became a ghetto for refugees like so many towns before.

Detainees in this camp were divided into three categories: Women and children, the (presumably) male population of the village, and inmates transferred from other camps. In all, there were about 4,000 to 6,000 prisoners living there at any given time. If living would be the correct word to use given their situation.

Some detainees, whose job it was to dig graves and bury the inmates, confirmed to have found numerous disfigured and half-burned corpses of the people they knew.

"My brother, six others and I were taken by some men to a place where there were corpses on the floor. When we were digging the graves, some soldiers or guards from the camp watched us and then three police officers replaced them. There were three bodies (to be buried) and I knew two of them. One was a man named Ante, who worked in the school in Kozarac and the other was his son, Zoran. Both had the back halves of their heads missing and one had been shot through the eye. We found the third corpse in a burned-down house, near a group of burned houses. The was old corpse; it was falling apart and the head had been bashed beyond recognition...I buried Meho Krajina and Tofa Puric, both had had their throats slit. I buried third man whom I recognized but whose name I did not know..." (Said survivor R.; "Helsinki Watch II", p. 148)

"We were forced to abandon our home on June 28 when our house was burned. There was "ethnic cleansing" and my husband was taken to a detention camp. We left our house but not village. We moved all the time because of the shelling, looking for shelter with our neighbours and children. We would hide in cellars. My house was burned at 4:00 a.m., before dawn. We weren't in our house, we were staying together in groups because we were afraid of the infantry...We weren't sleeping - we were all dressed because of the shelling. You had to be ready to go to the woods. My daughter went for water, and when I went to get it, a man said that our house was burning. We left the house in which we were staying when the shooting ended and went to the woods. All night soldiers were walking through the village, burning houses...The army came to the village to take the men to detention centres. There was a lot of blood on the streets. They killed and tortured them. I saw it happen; they put the men together and called out names. These called by name were taken to a barn and all we could

hear were gunshots. I didn't know where my husband was for eight days, then I heard he was in Keraterm. In the village, about 180 men were killed. The army put all men in the centre of the village. After the killing, the women took care of the bodies and identified them. The older men buried the bodies," said one witness. ("Helsinki Watch II", pgs. 57-58)

Any male over 15 years of age was separated from his family and taken to a camp. Numerous children were born in the detention centres; some the product of love, but many more were the innocent victims of hate, rejected by their mothers and unknown to their fathers. In an ironic twist, the Superintendent of one of the camps where hundreds of children died was the former Headmaster of the elementary school in Prijedor.

The living conditions were far from endurable, but there were a few moments of compassion by the soldiers and prison guards.

"We were first held in a school auditorium. During the first days, we were not given any food, but we did manage to get some water. On the fifth day, I fainted because I had not eaten. A man handed my mother some bread and a soldier gave us some juice. We slept on a bench. When they saw that women and children were beginning to faint, those who had family in the area were allowed to go to Trnopolje." (R.K.; "Helsinki Watch II", p. 141)

The pungent smell of human excrement and the sickly-sweet mell of human blood wafted across the camp across the camp from the open field toilet and from anywhere the dead and dying could be found. Victims with open, festering wounds lay on the floor, slowly dying. A few were lucky enough to have their injuries diagnosed by medical professionals, but no-one received treatment. There was simply no medicine to be found.

"During their visit to Trnopolje, Helsinki Watch representatives visited a tiny health clinic, which was about four square metres in size. Two people who earlier had been brought from the Omarska camp lay on the tile floor. Both were covered with flies. One had an open wound on the leg, which had toilet paper wrapped around it. The other person's face was completely swollen and covered with dried blood. Both were conscious, but appeared to be in shock. Two doctors were also being detained in Trnopolje and they attended to the ghetto's sick and beaten. The doctors appeared to have no medicine, antibiotics or anaesthetics." ("Helsinki Watch II", p. 144)

Dysentery was particularly wide-spread. There was no water, so many children became dehydrated. Children and nursing infants were most severely afflicted due to the shortage of milk and suitable food. The stress of life in the camp led to many instances of autism among the children; the result of the deep, traumatic shock of the war. But, miraculously, within the camp, there was some camaraderie and co-operation as explained by one survivor, identified only as K.B.

"Nothing was organized at Trnopolje; there was no food, even the water pipes didn't function. Whatever we had to do to survive, we did for ourselves. We got a communal kitchen working and some among us would act as butcher and catch cows, slaughter and cook them. Some of the people who had been expelled from their homes had brought stoves and wood. Later, the ICRC come with supplies.

"The town was controlled by checkpoints it, and wires were placed around the central public building. People were coming in from all over, sleeping in their cars, farm machinery. Up to nine or 10 thousand (people) came." ("Helsinki Watch II", p. 142)

For the first four days of their detention, inmates received neither food nor water. Eventually, a field kitchen was installed which provided the inmates with one meal a day - a few spoonfuls of cooked food and two small slices of bread. The local Red Cross working within the camp sold food to the inmates. Those who had money to buy food shared their bounty with those who did not.

"When we got there, they searched all of us. We had nothing to eat, but the local Red Cross eventually sold us some bread. You had to pay a day in advance and then, the next day, you would get the bread. They also gave us half a cup of milk for the children. They let people from Kamicani go home, so my sister-in-law went to her mother's and then she would bring us some food. But my family didn't want me to leave the ghetto because we were afraid of being raped, so we didn't leave the area. (R.K., from "Helsinki Watch II", p. 143)

Later, camp authorities allowed the inmates to exit the camp in search of food, only to kill them upon their return.

"People who went out in search of food would be met by D.C. with his associates. He waited for us as a vulture. People went to their houses, to their fire sites, in hope to find some food for their children. During one day only, they killed six members of the family Foric: Sakib, Asim, Adem, Zilho, Jasmin and Zijad. They killed Anto Murgic and his son. In my opinion, between 50 and 60 people were killed who

went in search for food to the village Trnoplje." (T.R.; "The Centre...", Zenica, p. 55)

Inmates were constantly robbed by both the camp's wardens and armed villagers. They snatched gold, money, clothes and any valuable object from the inmates. They ordered detainees to collect a certain amount of money under the threat of death. If the money was not turned over, one inmate was shot every 10 minutes, at the guard's discretion. ("I. Kajan", p. 51)

And at night, women were most frequently the targets for attack. They would be taken into a room separate from the other detainees for "interrogation" - another way of saying they were being taken away to be raped.

"In Trnopolje, they were always shooting and cursing at us. They took out men who disappeared and they beat us. One night they come to the room where we women and children slept. They told the younger women to get out. They said: "You, in the blue sweat-suit, get out." Then they got to me and told me to get out. I got halfway down the hall when they said: "Not you - go back," and they got my friend instead. She returned later and said she had been questioned.

"The next day, they come back and told those of us who had not gotten out last night to get out of the room. I walked into a room, but they didn't want to turn on the light. There was a man on the couch and one candle was burning. He asked me to answer his questions or "You know what will happen." He asked: "Who is your father? Did you vote? What is a jihad?" He said: "Show me how you pray to God." I didn't want to get on the floor and pray because I was afraid. He asked me if I went to the mosque and about my father's whereabouts. I was crying throughout the interrogation.

"He suggested that we go into a house, where there were soldiers. I said no. I said I wanted to go back with the rest of the people and he told me to go. Then he asked: "How about if you and I take a walk?" Again, I said no. Then he said: "You and I will see one another tomorrow." I was able to go back with my family then. During our interrogation, men in camouflage uniforms were walking around," said K.R., a survivor. ("Helsinki Watch II", pgs 144-145)

And yet another testimony of the horrendous crimes perpetrated against women is told in this account by A., a survivor, taken from Helsinki Watch II, page 182.

"Every night, the soldiers would come to the large room where we were confined. They would take out girls and rape them - at least one

girl was taken every night. The women who had babies came back. Some girls never came back. Mothers would hide their daughters under blankets. The soldiers would pull aside the blankets and look at the girls with flashlights...One was my physics teacher Lj. Z. He had been my teacher for four years...Another was M.R.; he was not young man. He had been my craft teacher."

Pregnant and nursing women were not spared this torture. Women with infants and very small children were forced to leave them behind - trusting that soldiers would not come along and murder them in their sleep - while they were taken away to be raped, usually by former neighbours and friends.

"They come at night with flashlights, looking for specific women. My cousin, A.S., I was at her wedding one year ago. She had an eight-month-old baby and was still breast feeding. We knew these men; they used to be our neighbours. They asked for her by name. Her mother and mother-in-law said she wasn't there. The soldiers threatened to put a bomb in her room. Her mother screamed: "Don't take her!" The man said: "We want her, not you." She gave her baby to her mother and went out with the soldiers...She was outside about three hours. When she returned, she was stiff and frozen and in shock." (Said S.S.; "Helsinki Watch II", pgs. 183-184)

And the most horrifying accounts come from those who confirm the suspicions that girls who had scarcely reached puberty (if they even had reached puberty), were being sexually tortured.

"Very few women were raped in my village. But in the camp in Trnopolje, (they) chose small children. I hid in a corner because I did not want to be noticed. I hid there for 14 days. Some of the soldiers had sympathy for us, but very few. During the day, the IRC and journalists were around (but) all of the bad things happened at night, when they were gone.

"There was one well-developed 12-year-old; they took her mostly at night," said M. ("Helsinki Watch II", p. 188 and R. Gutman, pgs. 64-67)

It was not uncommon to have a mother and daughter raped simultaneously in the same room. Rapes were usually performed by several soldiers upon one victim. There was one case reported that one woman was forced to have sex with 12 soldiers in turn, all on the same night. (R. Gutman, pgs. 64-47)

But the terror of these women and children did not begin within the camp's barbed-wire walls. For many, the nightmare began on the

ride into camp, in the goods-wagons used to transport the victims to their new "homes."

"I will never forget that day. It was raining as if heavens opened. We were all wet, hungry and terrified. They pushed us towards the train, standing in the open. Next to the column of women and children there were two tanks accompanying us. On the way, the soldiers poured brandy on us, cursed us, and threatened to butcher us. Over 120 children, women, the old and the sick were shoved into the goods wagons. They started robbing and grabbing everything from us again. We stayed in the closed wagons, standing, till the morning. Then, we were allowed to get out of the wagons to relieve ourselves, there, in the open, in their presence. On the way to Dobo, the train stopped for several times. Every time it stopped, people were abused and some killed. I knew Muharem Hadzic, a father of three, who was killed during one of those halts in the place called "Kamenolom" (stone-pit) near Dobo. It was only when we reached the territory under the control of the Bosnian government that the children got some food." (The confession of a woman from the camp Trnopolje; "I. Kajan", pgs. 51-53)

7. OMARSKA: THE CAMP OF DEATH

"Omarska, Omarska, Omarska...I will never be able to forget these words. That is the place where a man ceased to be a man. That is the place where even every wild beast would be ashamed of being a man. That is the place where human morality descended to its lowest; where human brutality, bestiality and insensitivity touched the very bottom. That is the place where no difference was made between men, women and children. All were tortured and murdered in the same way. I can no longer believe in a man, his dignity, his morality. After all I have seen and been through, I am simply no longer a human being."

Seated in the University of Toronto's cafeteria, this boy with black, restless eyes, looks more like a student than a concentration camp survivor, but his demeanor gives him away. As he speaks, his hands tremble uncontrollably as the memories flood back. His voice is uncertain, and at times our conversation is interrupted by a deep, inner sobbing which gives away the young man's pain. He has lost everything - his parents, his home, his youth, his future - and at 18, believes he can no longer live life as the rest of us.

"We were bought in from Kevljani to Prijedor, to the hell "Mladost." There, all men from 13 to 70 years were separated from women and children. Women and children remained in the hall, while we were transferred to the village Brezicane where we were detained for two days. We were foot-kicked and struck with rifles' butt-ends. Murdering started. From there, we were transported to the camp "Keraterm" and then, during the night, to the camp Omarska. On the night of our arrival to Omarska, five people were killed. In the following days, I was transferred to the so-called "White House." In the room where I was accommodated, there were already 26 people.

"The "White House" consists of five rooms - two on the right side, two on the left, and another small one at the front.

The first small one on the left was intended for the accommodation of the so-called Muslim extremes. In that room, there were Haladzic Sead, Messic Halim and a few other guys considered by the camp authorities to be extremely dangerous. All people brought to the White House were designated for liquidation. The White House was all in blood. All the walls were covered with blood. On the first night of my arrival to the White House, they killed Ceric, the professor of the maths and physics in the Secondary School in Prijedor.

"I eye-witnessed the murdering of Azur Jakupovic. The wounds on his legs were all wormy. He could neither walk nor stand. He had a green sweater, long fair hair, short jeans. His face was beyond recognition. He used to be a strong young man. He was a body-builder. When they had taken him out, the guard P. asked him: "Hey, you are still alive?" He came up to him and stabbed a large army knife twice under his ribs. Only a kind of deep sigh was heard. There was no howl. After that, he was alive for another two days...

"...The sight of alive, but wormy people was petrifying. Can you imagine talking with a man while worms are coming out of his cheek or neck? These are ghostly sights. The pungent, nauseating smell of decaying human bodies and human blood that was shed all over the yard, at white summer heat, was simply suffocating.

"A principal method of murdering was with blunt objects. Several guards would take an inmate out and beat him ruthlessly. The inmates were mostly liquidated at night. Our executioners were mostly young people. Some of them were my colleagues from the high school. At first they did not kill much. They were somehow timid, as if they were ashamed of the place and the role assigned to them. They kept their rifles tight, they were afraid of the inmates. However, once they started

killing, they turned into a room of beasts. Fear and shame simply vanished. They would enter a room accommodating 500-600 inmates without a rifle and select a victim. They would circle around it. They would measure it and take it away for butchering.

"Every inmate thought only of when and how he was to be eliminated. At times, we encouraged each other. We would get great courage and a wish to live only from catching the sight of green vegetation on our way to have lunch. It gave us the hope of survival. People often had a nervous breakdown and in such condition they would attack the guards, who killed them by shooting into a room full of prisoners, thus killing and wounding other inmates as well. The White House was the horror that is hard to describe. The inmates were living corpses. Bloody walls with dangling pieces of human skin and hair strands. Floors covered with excrement and dried-up blood. Human teeth scattered all over the place. Revolting smell of decomposed human bodies spreading throughout. These were biblical sights.

"Only those who were physically and mentally strongest, with a little bit of mere chance, survived. One day, during the hearing, the inspector told me: "You are an unbelievably lucky man. This morning I got up refreshed and joyful. I had a cup of coffee and I feel relaxed. That's why you'll stay alive today. Maybe the one coming after you to the hearing won't be so lucky. Everything depends on my mood." And, really, everything DID depend on the mood of these monstrous masters of human lives and fates." (Interview with a White House survivor, "NSU", Budapest, November, 1993)

Omarska was situated in the abandoned iron-ore mine in northwest Bosnia, between Prijedor and Banja Lujka. In the vicinity of this camp, there was Tomasica, a mine where, according to witnesses, the largest number of corpses from this camp were dumped. Detainees were placed in rooms used as garages or store-rooms in the basement or in the rooms intended for offices on the first floor. The camp existed from the beginning of June until early August, 1992. After its termination, the surviving inmates were transferred to other camps, where their terror continued.

The brutality at Omarska may well exceed that of any of the other camps existing across Bosnia-Herzegovina. Due to the mass executions that were carried out there, it is virtually impossible to keep track of the number of victims who passed through its gates, but independent sources estimate that more than 10,000 people were in the

camp at one point or another during those two months. Four thousand of these people have never been seen since.

The majority of the inmates at Omarska were intellectuals, political activists and business owners, as well as other high-ranking Bosnian authorities. Inmates from other camps where the presence of foreign journalists hampered the extermination process were also brought to this camp for disposal.

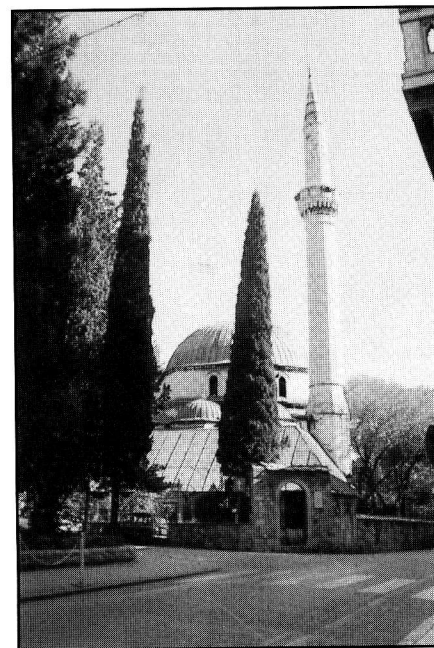
The living conditions within the camp were ghastly. Rooms were so overcrowded that there was not space enough for everyone to sleep lying down (at one time). When they could lie down, it was on a cold, bare, concrete floor, often splashed with machine oil, which ate away at the prisoners' flesh. Due to the overcrowding and lack of oxygen (the windows were constantly kept closed), many people began hallucinating and a few suffocated. Because of the excessive condensation in the room, the prisoners were almost always soaked through to the skin, which brought on several respiratory diseases. Dysentery and hepatitis top the list of diseases which claimed otherwise healthy people.

The smell of death was everywhere in the room. It became a virtual chamber of horrors.

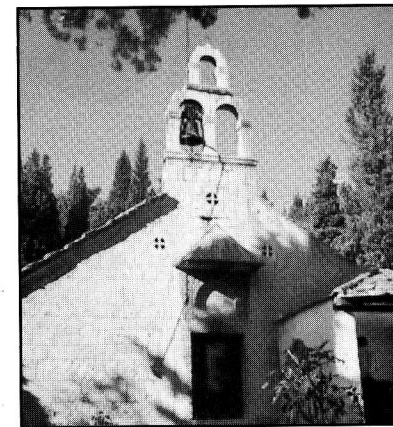
Prisoners were given exactly three minutes to reach the dining hall, eat their meal and return to their living quarters. Anyone who exceeded the time limit had their meal "privileges" revoked. Those who could least afford to miss a meal - the young, the elderly and the ill - were often the ones who went without the two or three spoons full of rice or cabbage and the slice of bread. It is little wonder that, on average, detainees lost 25 kilograms during their first month in the camp.

"We got very little to eat. Five hundred and forty people ate within 20 minutes, in groups of 30. We had three minutes in which to make a group, run to the kitchen, eat and return to our rooms. Five or six of them (the guards) were always standing in front of the kitchen, armed with stick. They enjoyed pouring water on the tiled floor, and whoever fell would be beaten to death. Many people decided not to eat to avoid the beatings...after all, we only received a little stew and a slice of bread," said H.H.. ("Helsinki Watch II", pgs. 94-95)

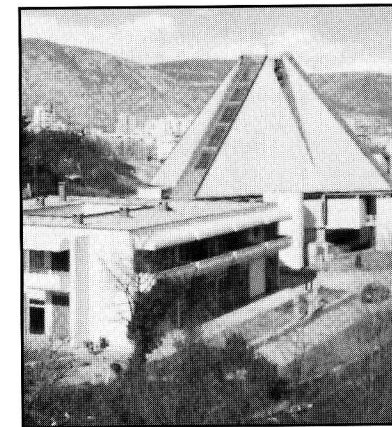
The most brutal methods of torture were those that exacted measures of physical and mental pain on the inmates. Victims were beaten to death with any object the guard could find - guns, power cables, metal rods, wood poles and baseball bats were particularly



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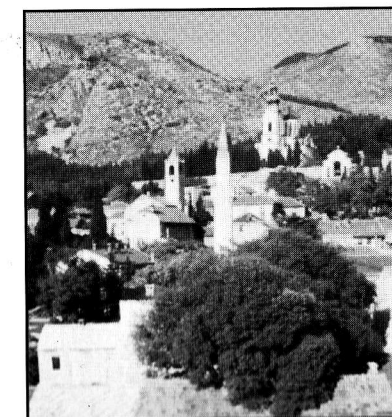
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A Mosaic of Bosnia's many houses of Worship

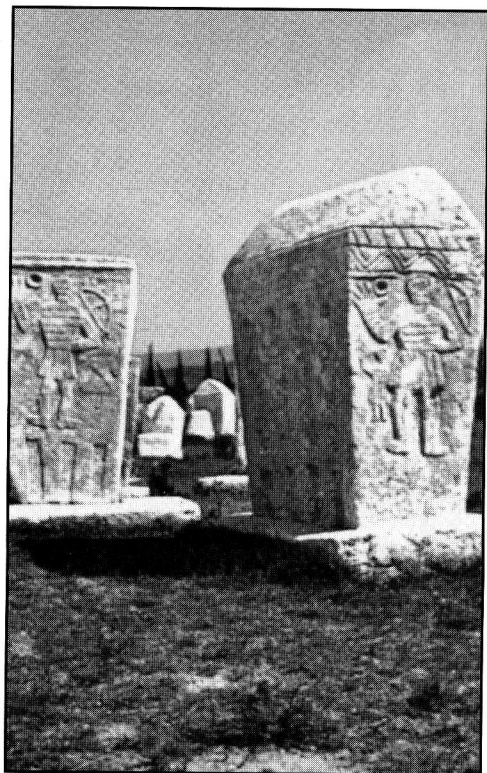
1. Muslim Mosque
2. Orthodox Church
3. Catholic Cathedral
4. Panorama of the Temple, Mosque & Orthodox Church
5. The Old Bridge at Mostar dating back 600 years



5



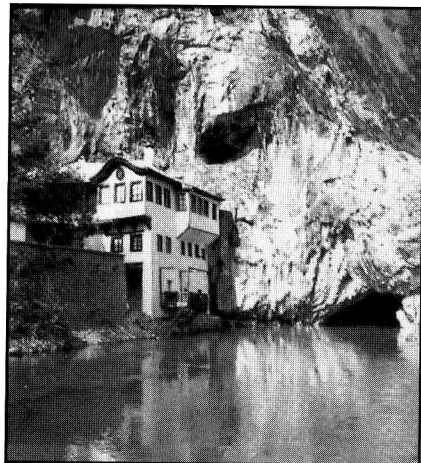
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Remnants of Ancient Bosnia

1. Stolav - ancient carvings on grave markers
2. Mogorjelo - ancient headstones from Paleolithic Era.
3. Blagaj - 'Traveller's Refuge' dating back to 15th century.

Destruction
in Mostar



Surviving the cold: A 75 year old Prijedor refugee spent the winter in a tent. She lived to see another spring.

1993, Fatima Basic, BCR archives





British U.N. Soliders evacuate women, children and the elderly from Srebrenica, Bosnia. They spent a week in crowded trucks without cover in search of a safe place. Many children died.

Photo: M. Cveticovic, Borba



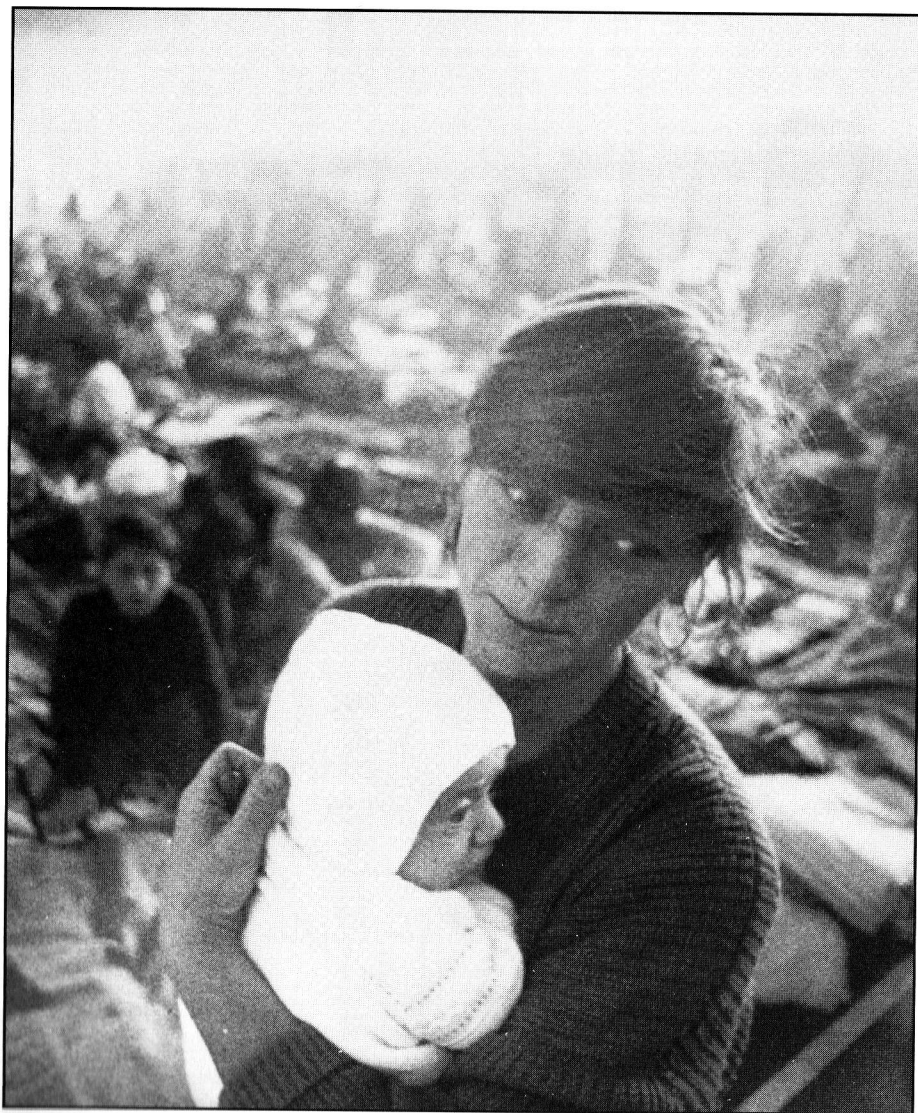
Mothers desperately cling to their children in a Sarajevo refugee centre. Aggressor soldiers would snatch children to separate mothers and children.

P. Mitic, Borba



Children being transported by bus from Bosnia to other countries for "safety". Mothers never knew that their child had been relocated.

P. Mitic, Borba



Mother with her sick child in the Tronopolje concentration camp. Mothers were unable to help these children who often died from illness, malnutrition, injury and disease.

M. Cvetkovic, Borba

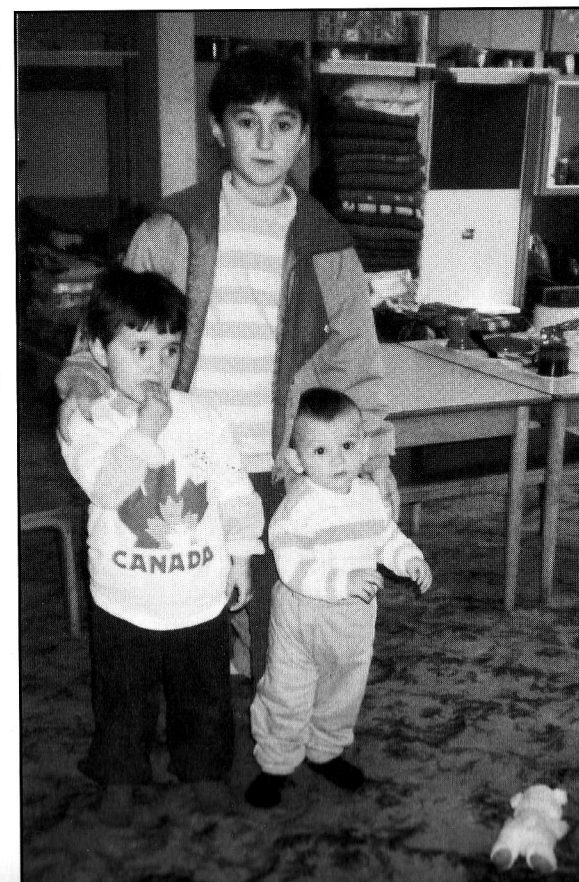


Orphans in the Refugee Camps

Above: Six boys slept in one bed at Camp Solin refugee camp, Croatia

Left: A 12 year old girl is both mother and father to her six year old sister and 13 month old brother. Jablanca, Bosnia-Hercegovina.

BCR Archives, 1993

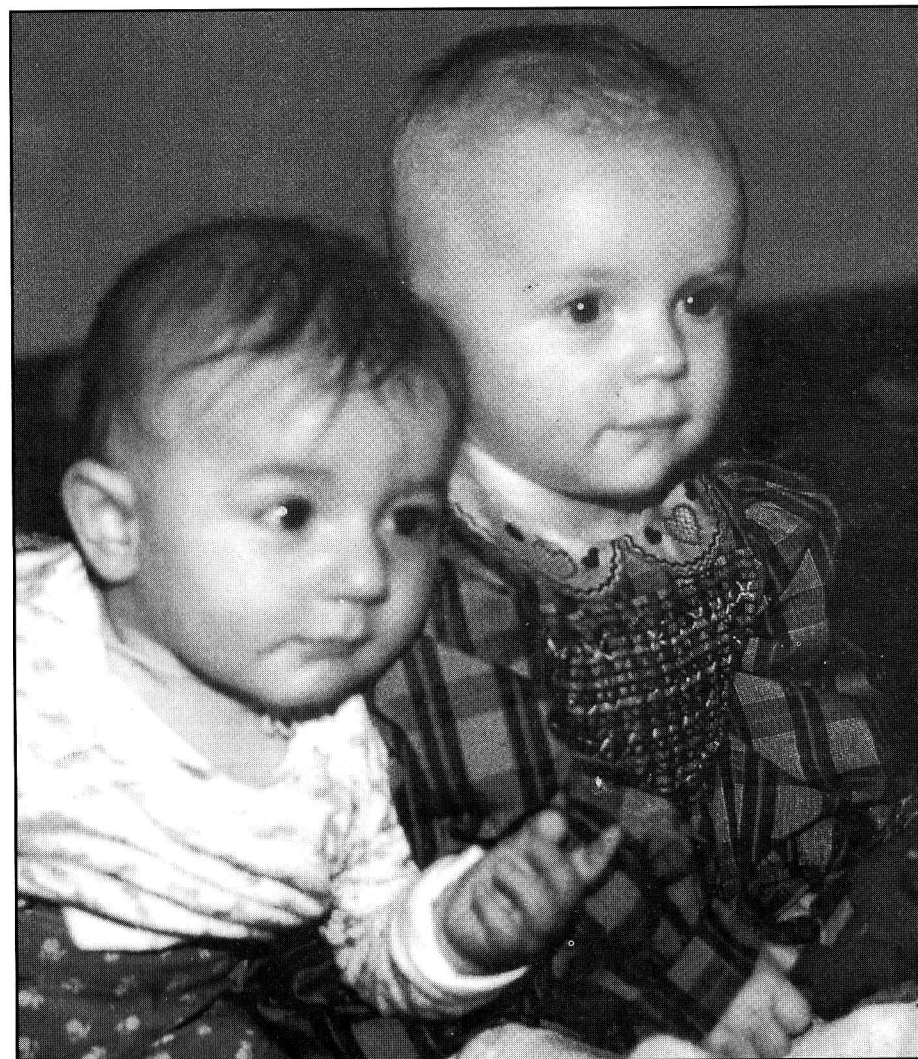




City Morgue in Tuzla. A doctor places another victim on the floor. The bullets don't discriminate by age.



An injured baby girl in the Tuzla hospital. She was hit in the head by shrapnel.



Orphaned children, city of Jblanica.

BCR Archives



A mother presses her hands against a bus window as her child is separated from her.

Sarajevo, 1993.



A young girl and her baby sister are left alone to fend for themselves. Their parent's whereabouts are unknown.



Left: An injured boy - his hands were burned. Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Right: Mothers weep as their children are separated from them in Bosnia.



Mothers and children in refugee camp, Split, Croatia. All of these children were born in the camp and BCR delivered baby care packs.



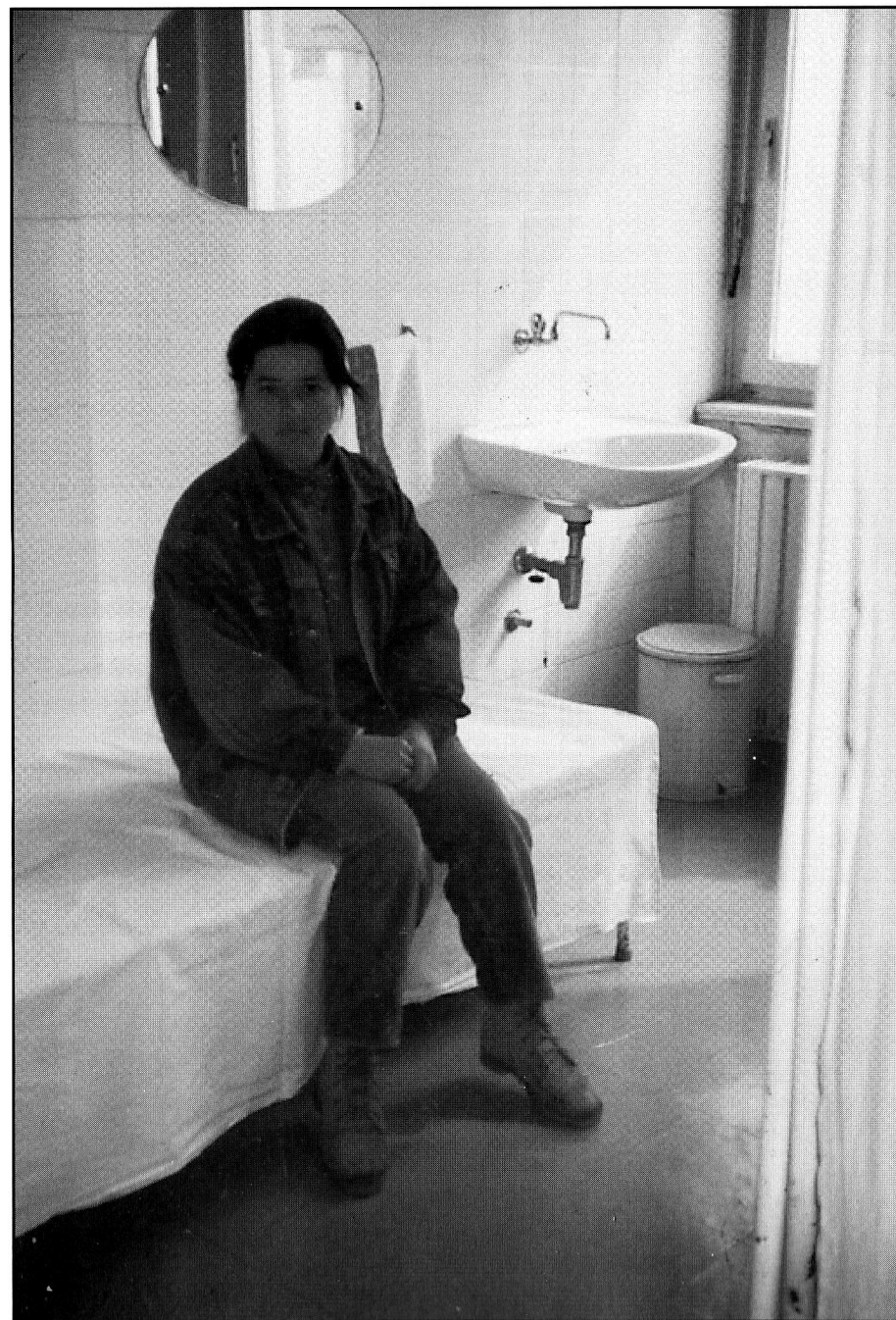
Top: Life behind barbed wire: Children in prison camps, Bosnia-Herzegovina.



Above: A mother wipes her tears as she cradles her sick infant in a Bosnian hospital.



Left: The children's tears symbolize suffering in Bosnia.



Rape victim aided by BCR in a city hospital in Jablinica, Bosnia.

BCR Archives, March 1993



Left: Loading the trucks:
One of many humanitarian
shipments bound for
Bosnia.

BCR Archives, 1993

Below:
Humanitarian goods
delivered inside Bosnia.
BCR representatives
oversee the distribution
of aid.



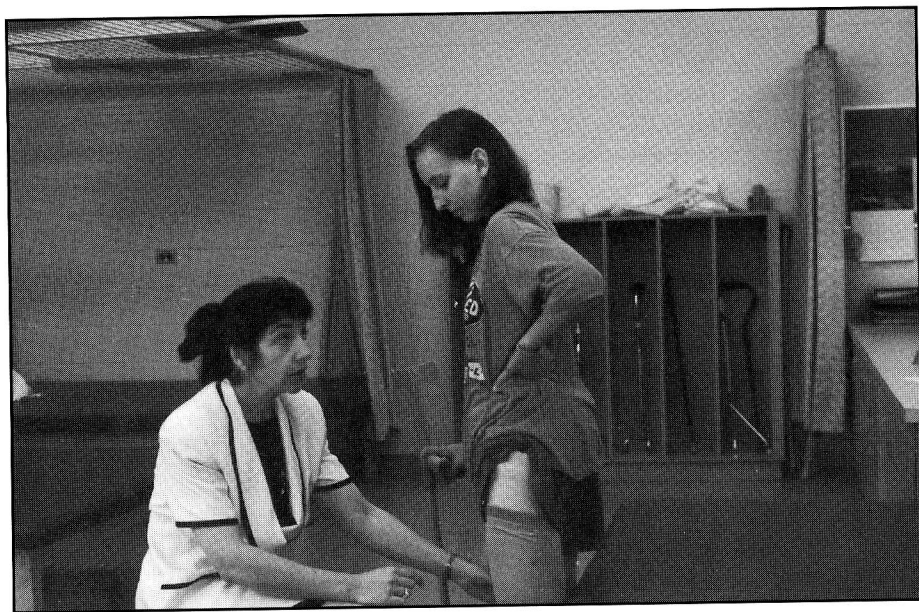
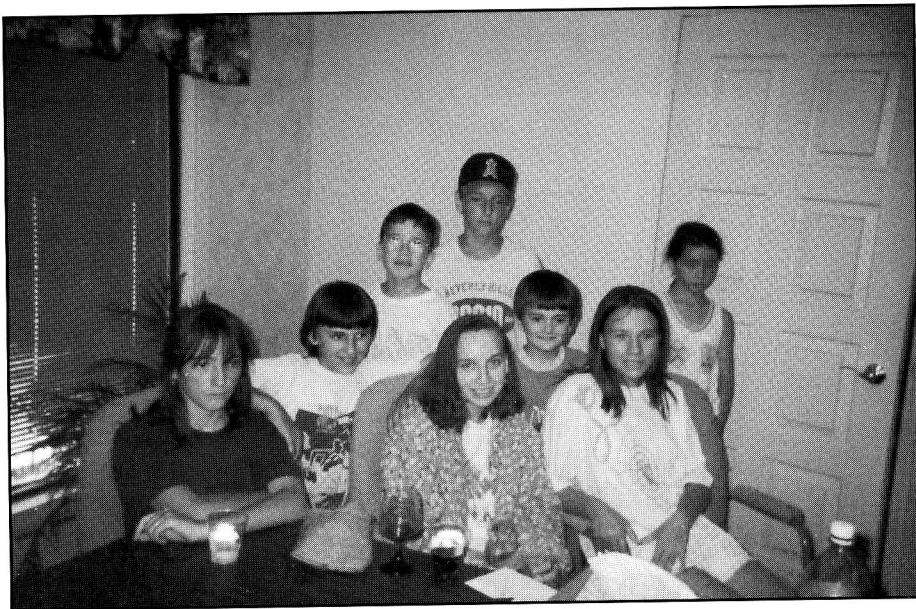
Right: Fatima and Saban
Basic in front of BCR's
Canadian House of
Refuge, Mostar.

BCR Archives, 1993

Below: Meeting the
children: BCR President,
Fatima Basic delivers
messages to Bosnian
children from Canada.

BCR Archives, 1993.





Top: Children aided by BCR at Edina's farewell party, July 1994, St. Catharines.

Bottom: Edina Hidic, brought to Canada for medical treatment, is fitted with prosthetic legs, at Niagara Rehab, June 1993, St. Catharines.

A Message from Edina

Dear Friends:

My name is Edina Hidic and I am 15 years old. I was born in Bosnia-Hercegovina. When I was growing up, Bosnia was a beautiful place to live. Everyone was friendly and happy.

In Spring, in the month of May, 1992, I lost both of my legs. A shell hit the shelter at my school and I watched seven of my friends die. We had to wait five hours for the help to come. My family did their best to take care of me.

In November of 1993, Bosnian Children Relief brought me to Canada for medical treatment that I could not receive in Bosnia-Hercegovina. In June, I will receive my permanent prosthesis. I will walk with my new prosthesis again. I can look forward for my new life in Canada. I am going to school. For me, Canada is a wonderful country. My wish is to be a doctor and help others.

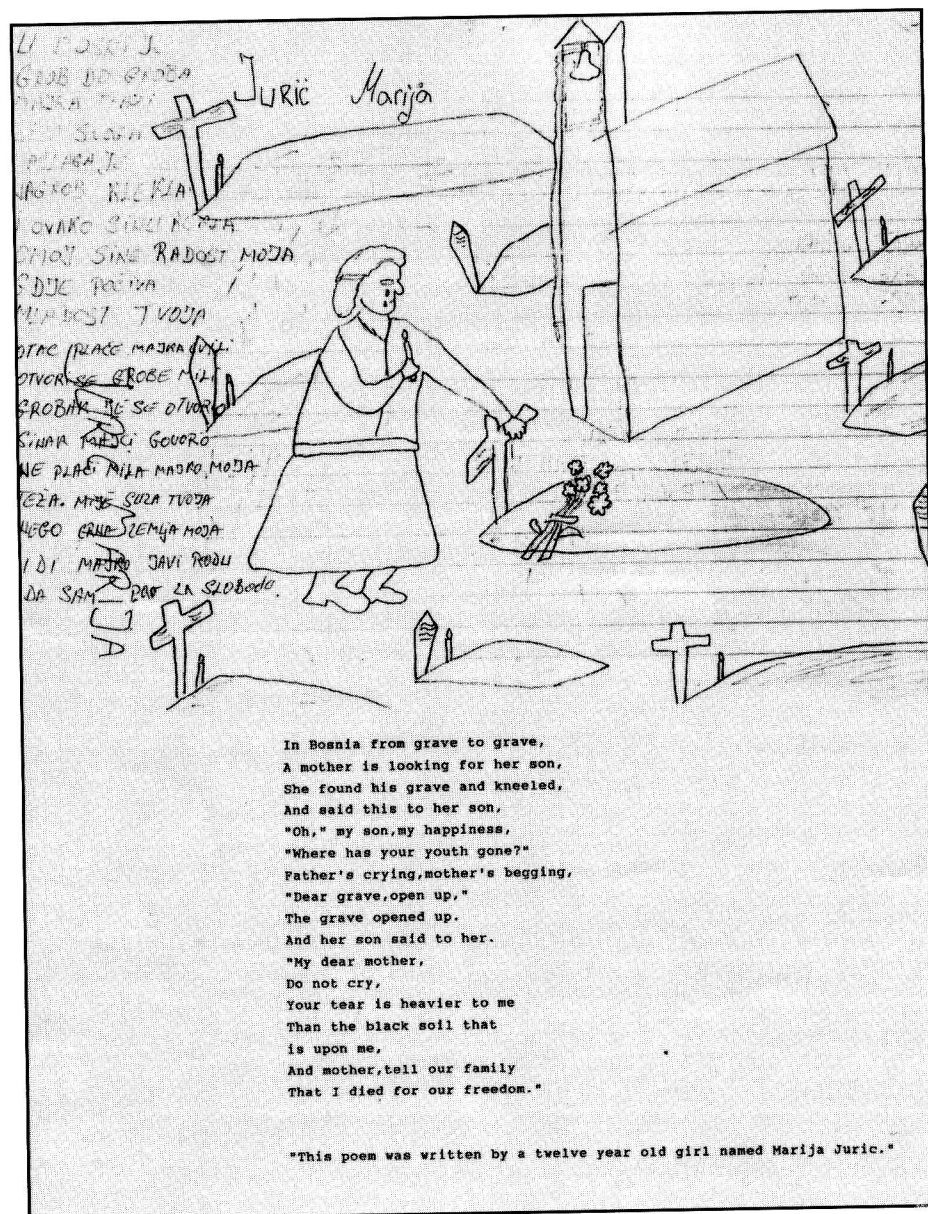
There are many children in Bosnia that need your help like I received. If you can help in any way, the children are waiting.

Always your friend,

Edina Hidic

***Since the time that Edina wrote this letter, the efforts of BCR have been successful and she has been reunited with her family. She is now living in Stuttgart, Germany and remains in close contact with the staff and volunteers at BCR. She hopes to visit Canada again one day.*





favoured. Maiming, castration and smashing heads against floors or radiators were also frequently used as forms of "punishment".

For many, it became less of a question of how they would die as when.

"They would take people out and crush their heads with iron rods, rifle butt-ends, boots, baseball bats...they butchered the prisoners here. It was not uncommon to take detainees for an interrogation and never to bring them back. People were killed when going to the toilet. They bathed us (twice in 72 days) by a water hose connected to a hydrant. They would pull out 10 people, place them before the most powerful spurt and bathe them with ice-cold water. Water pressure was so strong that it would knock down the prisoners who were so thin. The camp was full of lice. Typhus spread among the inmates." ("The...Research", p. 41)

One victim was beaten so severely that he was taken as dead by the guards. It was only a quirk of fate that saved his life.

"Once I was so much beaten up that I was placed among the dead who were not immediately driven away due to the shortage of fuel, so that detainees who loaded those dead people into trucks hid me behind the wire and later on brought me into the camp." ("The...Research", p. 73)

About the only privilege the guards could give a prisoner was death by shooting. It was not a privilege the guards doled out very generously, though, as they preferred to watch the inmates struggle between life and death. It is believed by many former inmates that the guards held contests to see who could come up with the most monstrous methods of torture. Those who came up with the most ferocious methods to kill their victims were promoted higher and faster than the others. One such method is described in this chilling testimony recounted in Toronto, Ontario, in October, 1993.

"On the (Muslim) religious feast "Lile," the guardsmen burned an enormous dumper tire, being several metres in diameter, and threw the inmates into it. At first, we heard appalling prisoners' screams and then everything died down: human bodies were burning."

Most of the detainees at Omarska were men between 15 and 55 years of age. Mental capacity and age meant nothing to the guards - anyone who looked old enough to be a participant in this brutal civil war was assumed to be a member of the resistance, whether they were or not.

"The most traumatic experience for me was to see all of the corpses. We saw corpses piled one on top of another, and some of the bodies had been there for 48 hours - we saw them in the day and on the following morning. The office in which we slept had window, and we saw bodies being thrown into a pile at night as well. The bodies eventually were gathered with a forklift and taken to an unknown destination. This happened almost every day - sometimes there was a lesser number of bodies (20 or 30) - but usually there were more...Most of the deaths occurred as the result of beatings." ("Helsinki Watch II", p. 103)

The few women who were detained at Omarska tell the chilling tale of brutal rape and torture.

"The commanding officer told me to make coffee for him and two other men present. One was a man named B. who was the manager of the mine in Omarska and he was serving his military duty and was in uniform. A second man was named N.G. and he was a reserve captain in the "Serbian Army." He said that the Muslims were raping Serbian women. G. told me to get out of the room, but then he grabbed me and took me to another office. He threw me on the floor and someone else came into the room. During that period, the electricity would go on and off at intervals. When I was assaulted, there was no electricity in the building and I could not identify the second man who entered the room. Both G. and this other man started to beat me. They said I was a Ustasa and that I needed to give birth to a Serb - that I would then be different. I was raped only by G.; the other man had left the room. After he raped me, I was ordered to go back to my room with the other women.

"The next evening, G. come to my door and told me to get out and I did so. He said that I must have gotten a cold the night before and he gave me some tea - but I didn't want to drink it. He then hit me in the head with the butt end of his revolver. He grabbed my chest and dragged me to the bathroom, where he beat me. The commanding officer was present during this entire abuse. I should add that all the women were beaten at various points during our detention, but none of us was ever beaten in the face - they only beat our bodies.

"On the third evening, G. took me out again and started to excuse himself for his action the previous evening, explaining that "...our nationalities are at war...". He then started to beat me again because I did not respond to his statements. On the fourth night, the G. came back again. He alleged that I was the lover of another prisoner and

because of this, I was shunning his advance. Then he beat me with a wire and hit me in the chest with his revolver. The guard who frequently gave us food came into the room. This guard was not a reservist, but an active member with the "Serbian Army" and he kicked G. out of the room. The commanding officer on duty came into the room and asked me who had raped me and beaten me. I replied that no-one had touched me. The commanding officer told me again that he would punish the perpetrator if I identified him. Again I answered that no-one had touched me because I was afraid of retribution later." ("Helsinki Watch II", pgs. 163-165)

8. KERATERM:

THE NINTH CIRCLE OF DANTE'S HELL

The camp Keraterm was located in an old ceramic tile factory on the outskirts of Prijedor. The four rooms housing as many as 600 detainees (each) were in the basement, with the interrogations rooms up above. The camp was surrounded by barbed wire and police at all times. Like Omarska, Keraterm had a reputation for being a particularly brutal camp where the inmates lives depended on luck and the mood of the camp guards.

Like most of the other camps in Bosnia, prisoners slept on the floors, even the women and children. The floors at Keraterm were especially cold and damp, being in the basement of the building. The lack of oxygen and fresh air was enough to claim many lives. Coupled with the germs spread through the human waste which was everywhere the spread of typhus, dysentery and other diseases spread throughout the camp like wildfire. There was nowhere to bathe and nowhere to shave and diseases spread like wildfire.

Beatings were a daily occurrence.

"From time to time, we were forced to line up and lie on the ground with our faces in the blood and dirt. The soldiers would then walk between us with stick and bars, beating people. I had lost a lot of weight in Keraterm, and my ribs were protruding through my skin. One soldier pulled me up by the hair, reached over, grabbed my rib, and snapped it," said A.H.. ("Helsinki Watch II," p. 124)

Perhaps one of the most brutal forms of torture was the way guards would force inmates to beat each other to death.

"In the evening, they would take people in groups of 10, forcing them to mutually torture each other. One had to lie down, while the

other two would stand on his arms by their legs and foot-kick him and strike him with iron rods they got from the guards. Half an hour later, the beaten would come back, and some would die afterwards. ("The...Research," p. 64) Detainees were forced to submit to various forms of sexual perversion and many were mutilated, causing even greater psychological distress. It was not a rare occurrence to see inmates shot in a roomful of people and left to die from their injuries.

"About 530 of us, who were present in the room, gathered in a corner. He (the warden Z.Z.) fired two bursts over the room walls. He wounded a man and when he saw blood streaming down the man's leg, he came back and cut the ligaments on both his legs by a bayonet. He cursed us and then took Huso Ganic and his son aside and broke Ganic's son's collarbone and smashed his kneecap...Five to six days later, 26 people were called out...S. Haladzic got his ear cut while the rest were beaten up. Dz. Mesic died after half an hour." ("The...Research," pgs. 65-66)

As a rule, inmates did not receive any food or water during the first days of their internment. Later on, they would be fed one meal a day, consisting of one slice of bread and a few spoonfuls of cooked food. Dinner was served from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m. but there was always less food than necessary for the number of inmates. Every day, between 50 and 100 inmates were deprived of even that one meal. While the food was being distributed, camp guards would walk around, beating the inmates.

Out of sheer desperation, the detainees began to eat the grass within the compound.

But the single worst event came during the early morning hours of July 25, 1992, after days of fighting. The day before had been hot, with temperatures exceeding 35 degrees Celsius. In the early evening, soldiers arrived from the front with heavy casualties and began beating the inmates as their form of revenge. Thirty inmates were selected by the Serb soldiers and were beaten for four hours, or until death came to save them from any further indignity.

The overcrowding was unbearable in the July heat. The doors and windows were kept closed at all times causing many to suffocate. The inmates bathed in their own sweat and the heat and humidity was so intense the varnish even rolled down the wooden walls of the building. Many began to hallucinate. In their stupor, many inmates began to sing, dance and talk with family members who were no longer alive.

In a desperate attempt for water and air, the inmates stripped naked and moved towards the door, hoping for even a passing breeze. At that, the camp wardens opened a spray of machine gun fire through the windows and doors and thin sheet-metal walls, killing 150 people in half an hour. Then, in the still summer night, all was quiet once again.

The machine guns blasted away more than the innocent victims. They seemed to blast away the last traces of humanity, dignity and morality as well.

"There was blood all over the place. I tried to shield myself with a corpse. When the shooting stopped, everything was full of holes. Then the soldiers threw something inside the room and the prisoners couldn't breathe - some suffocated on the gas. Everyone tried to hide their faces with their clothing...There were so many bodies that you had to climb over them. A few stayed alive but most of them were killed or wounded. (H. and A.H., camp survivors. "Helsinki Watch II," pgs. 126-127)

"...Then a truck, a trailer arrived and all the dead and the wounded were shoved into it. As the truck moved on, it left a trace of blood behind. Even the detainees who loaded the corpses into the trailer were driven away. They never came back. Afterwards, a cistern was brought up to wash blood off the walls and the floor. Those who survived this massacre got no food nor water in the ensuing three days. They had to lie down all the day, in the sun, with their faces toward the ground and their hands behind their necks. At night, they would take them out and beat them..." (P.N., a former inmate. "The...Research," p. 51)

Part Four CUTTING OFF HUMANITARIAN AID

For those living outside of prison camps, cutting off shipments of food and medical supplies from the IRC, UNICEF and other agencies was one of the most effective methods of torture. The consequences of this depravation have already been seen in the malnutrition of many Bosnians, especially children. More than 350,000 children are at risk of starvation across the country. The health of breast-fed babies, small children and the injured is particularly bad as there have been so many shipments of vitamin supplements and medicine cut off by the Serbian troops.

Most frequently, the shipments were halted to protect the humanitarian aid workers who were at risk every time they went through the lines. Serb troops continually threatened to attack the peacekeepers and kept up a steady rain of gunfire, knowing that all flights and/or convoys would be halted if the caregivers were faced with danger.

Kesevo Hospital in Sarajevo, the largest childrens' health facility in Bosnia, is under constant air and machine gun fire from the surrounding hills, making medical shipments all but impossible. On September 3, 1992, an Italian aircraft transporting food and medical equipment was shot down, bringing all humanitarian shipments to a halt until October 20. This is just one of many incidents which have stopped the humanitarian shipments, often for months at a time.

"On June 6, 1992, the Secretary-General reported to the Security Council that UNPROFOR had negotiated, on 5 June, for the handing over, to the Force, of Sarajevo airport, so that it could be made available for humanitarian purposes. Under the agreement, UNPROFOR would ensure the immediate security of the airport and its installations, supervise the operation of the airport, control its facilities and organization, facilitate the unloading of humanitarian cargo and ensure the safe movement of humanitarian aid and related personnel. UNPROFOR would also verify the withdrawal of anti-aircraft weapons systems from within range of the airport and its approaches and monitor the concentration of artillery, mortar and ground-to-ground missile systems in specified areas which would be agreed by it. In his report, the Secretary-General stated that the addition of these new functions to UNPROFOR's mandate and a corresponding increase of the Force's strength would require the consent of the Council.

By Resolution 758 (1992), of 8 June, the Security Council decided to enlarge the mandate and strength of UNPROFOR in accordance with the Secretary-General's recommendations.

On 10 June, the Force Commander of UNPROFOR decided to dispatch his Chief of Staff to Sarajevo as Commander-designate of UNPROFOR's new Sarajevo sector. He was accompanied by an advance party including the same United Nations military observers and reconnaissance elements drawn from UNPROFOR's Canadian infantry battalion.

Following intensive work by UNPROFOR to establish the modalities of implementation of the 5 June agreement, and a visit to Sarajevo by President Francois Mitterand of France on 28 June, the Secretary-General reported to the Security Council on 29 June that considerable progress had been made toward the assumption by UNPROFOR of responsibility for the airport." ("The United Nations and the Former Yugoslavia," p. 7)

Due to the fact that military aircrafts were being used in attacks on civilian populations across Bosnia, hampering humanitarian aid deliveries, the U.N. was forced to make a decision about the introduction of fly-overs across Bosnia and Hercegovina.

"In a further development, the Security Council, on 9 October, adopted its Resolution 781 (1992), banning all military flights in the airspace of Bosnia and Hercegovina, except those of UNPROFOR and other flights in support of the United Nations operations, including humanitarian assistance. The Council requested UNPROFOR to

monitor compliance with the ban and to place observers, where necessary, at airfields across the former Yugoslavia. The Council also requested that the Force employ "an appropriate mechanism for approval and inspection" to ensure that the purpose of other flights to and from Bosnia and Hercegovina was consistent with its resolution. The Security Council further requested the Secretary-General to report periodically on the implementation of the ban and to report immediately any evidence of violations. It undertook to examine, without delay, all such information and to consider urgently further measures necessary to enforce the ban. It also called on States to provide technical assistance to UNPROFOR in its monitoring efforts." ("The...Yugoslavia," p. 9)

However, even these steps did not stop the Serb bombing of the Bosnian civilian population, proving that more drastic steps were needed to put and end to the fighting.

"On 16 March, 1993, the Secretary-General reported that three aircrafts had dropped bombs on two villages east of Srebrenica on 13 March, before leaving in the direction of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). It was the first time since the Security Council instituted the "no-fly zone" in Bosnia and Hercegovina that aircrafts were used in combat activity in that country. UNPROFOR has not been able to determine to whom the aircraft belonged. On 17 March, the Security Council, in a statement by its President, strongly condemned all violations of its relevant resolutions and underlined the fact that since the beginning of the monitoring operations in early November, 1992, the United Nations had reported 465 violations over the "no-fly zone." The Council demanded from the Bosnian Serbs an immediate explanation of the violations, and particularly of the aerial bombardment of the two villages and requested the Secretary-General to ensure that an investigation was made of the reported possible use of the territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to launch air strikes against Bosnia and Hercegovina.

On 27 April, the Secretary-General reported to the Council that on 24 March, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia had been requested to provide any information relevant to the incidents. The only response received was a note conveying a statement by the Government of that country, in which it stated that "airplanes and helicopters of the Air Force of the Army of Yugoslavia have not violated the airspace of Bosnia and Hercegovina since the no-fly zone came into effect."

"On 31 March, the Security Council adopted its Resolution 816 (1993) by which it extended the ban on military flights to cover flights by all fixed-wing and rotary-wing aircraft in the airspace of Bosnia and Hercegovina...On 9 April, the Secretary-General transmitted to the Security Council a letter from the Secretary-General of NATO, Dr. Manfred Wörner, informing him that the North Atlantic Council had adopted the "necessary arrangements" to ensure compliance with the ban on military flights and that it was prepared to begin the operation at GMT on 12 April, 1993." ("The...Yugoslavia," pgs. 13-14).

Twenty-five thousand children are without food, water, heat or medicine in Gorazde, where diseases have reached almost epidemic proportions. Scores of people died waiting for the first medical shipment to arrive in August, 1992. Serb forces have repeatedly turned back convoys of humanitarian aid, claiming to have seen weaponry in with the food and medicine. This stalling tactic has been used extensively across Bosnia and has been an effective method for keeping the desperately needed supplies away from the Bosnian population.

Srebrenica has been virtually isolated from the world for months. After a horrifying series of attacks, convoys of humanitarian aid reached the town, introducing the first food or medicine the town had seen since the town fell to the Serbs. More than 300 people had already died from malnutrition and starvation and countless operations had been performed without anaesthetic.

Until the first convoy of food and medical supplies entered the village of Zepa, 30,000 refugees lived in desperation without food, water or ample medical supplies. Doctors used old carpentry saws to amputate limbs, applied alcohol as the only anesthetic and used heated wire to cauterize wounds. These supplies had been kept, unsterilized, in wooden boxes. Sixteen people died from post-operative gangrene.

When the village of Cerska fell on April 11, 1992, 20,000 people were left to suffer for 10 months until humanitarian aid was able to pass through the town. However, Serbian Nationalist forces blocked the passage of the convoy several times until finally the U.N. forces attempted to drop the aid from the air. However, only a few weeks later, on March 2, 1993, the rebels attacked the village, destroying everything in sight and killing scores of its inhabitants.

In response to the constant prevention of the humanitarian aid delivery and the attacks on humanitarian convoys, the U.N. Security Council adopted Resolution 770 (1992) on August 13 of that year.

"The Council, acting under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, called on States to "take nationally or through regional agencies or arrangements all measures necessary" to facilitate, in co-ordination with the United Nations, the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Sarajevo and wherever needed in other parts of Bosnia and Hercegovina...On 10 September, following consultations with a number of Governments, the Secretary-General submitted a further report to the Security Council recommending the expansion of UNPROFOR's mandate and strength in Bosnia and Hercegovina. He proposed that UNPROFOR's task, under its enlarged mandate, would be to support efforts by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) to deliver humanitarian relief throughout Bosnia and Hercegovina, and in particular, to provide protection, at UNCHR's request, where and when UNCHR considered such protection necessary. In addition, UNPROFOR could be used to protect convoys of released civilian detainees if the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) so requested and if the Force Commander agreed that the request was practicable...UNPROFOR troops would follow normal peacekeeping rules of engagement, which authorize them to use force in self-defence, including situations in which armed persons attempt by force to prevent them from carrying out their mandate." ("The...Yugoslavia," p. 8)

"Water, too, has been used as a weapon of war. And particularly in Bosnia and Hercegovina, the destruction of water systems has had appalling consequences for local populations. In Sarajevo, for example, many parts of the city had no running water for nearly a year and a half. Sarajevans until recently had to scramble throughout sniper fire and line up for hours to obtain their meager rations of 1.5 litres a day.

"...(In Sarajevo) water systems have been deliberately destroyed to isolate and break down residential neighbourhoods. People have become so desperate that they brave snipers and mortar attacks to find any water at all from the few wells in the city. Queues for water, which weave around the burned-out shells of buildings, are easy prey for snipers. Hundreds of children and adults have been attacked while waiting for water. The human cost of Sarajevo's water problems extends beyond the siniping of civilians in queues. The lack of water has also adversely affected children through the spread of waterborne diseases, a deterioration of sanitary conditions and an increase in diarrhea and dehydration.

Since the war began, 30 per cent of the pumping systems have been destroyed and 60 per cent of the piping has been ruined. The remaining water system depends on electrical power, and electricity is rarely available. As a result, the population is almost always without running water. During the almost two years of siege in Sarajevo, only one water source has remained intact - the brewery. Each day, 70,000 people, many of whom walk kilometres, arrive at the brewery to collect their ration." (UNICEF - Emergency Operations in former Yugoslavia)

Part Five THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE CONFLICT IN BOSNIA

Ethnic cleansing in Bosnia has had a devastating effect upon the country. According to the UNCHR, more than 2,280,000 people in the country have been relocated, accounting for upwards of 52 per cent of the total population before the war. Children account for 40 per cent of the total number of relocated (deported to missing) individuals. In the first year of fighting, more than 15,000 children were killed, died of exposure, hunger, disease or were simply lost. More than 100,000 families were directly exposed to the horrors of religious persecution within this same time frame. Numerous children witnessed the murder and torture of their parents, their deportation to the prison camps and the destruction of their homes and villages.

According to reports from the Bosnian government, as of June 1, 1994, 50,000 children have died, 150,000 children have been injured and countless others have been separated from their families. Babies born of rape - abandoned by mothers and unknown to fathers - have been the innocent victims of a black-market baby trade; sold by rebel government officials to the highest bidder.

The brutal starvation, rape and execution of men, women and children all across Bosnia and Hercegovina - in cities, towns and villages and in concentration camps - has had a devastating effect on the Bosnian people. This will no doubt create generations of Bosnians

on either side with "ethnic cleansing syndrome;" able to neither forgive nor forget the atrocities committed during the Bosnian conflict.

The days when harmony covered Bosnia like a warm summer sky seem impossibly distant - too long ago to remember - as fear and loathing cloaks Bosnia like a cold November drizzle. But it was not all that long ago.

When the nightmare is over, let us hope that these dark days are as easily forgotten by the Bosnian people as it will no doubt be for the rest of the world.

Without hope there is nothing.

Part Six
POEMS FROM THE
CHILDREN OF WAR

A MOTHER'S CRY

In Bosnia from grave to grave,
A mother is looking for her son,
She found his grave and kneeled,
And said this to her son:
"Oh, my son, my happiness,
Where has your youth gone?"
Father's crying, Mother's begging,
"Please, grave, open up,"
The grave opened up,
And her son said to her:
"My dear Mother,
Do not cry,
Your tear is heavier to me
Than the black soil that is upon me.
And mother, tell our family,
That I died for our freedom."

*Written by 12-year-old Maria Juric, Teslic, Bosnia
Translated by Selma Basic, BCR*

Neither my father,
nor my mother,
Knew the horrors of war.
And I am small,
And I wonder...
Is it possible for
Someone,
To become
So Mad
As to destroy my school,
And my house,
And to turn everything to ash and smoke?
Those of you who are big,
I beg you so,
To allow me to grow up,
And to wake in
Morning spring,
Full of sunshing,
So I can see
What tomorrow will be.

*Written by candlelight in a cellar,
hiding from the shelling
by 8-year-old Aida, Sarajevo.*

A Message to All People:

I pass through my town and I see faces strange to me. Faces full of bitterness and pain. Where has laughter gone? Where is our happiness? Somewhere...Somewhere far away from us. Why did they do this to us, their children? All we want is to play and see our friends. But not this horrible war which has happened to us...I send out a message - DO NOT EVER HARM THE CHILDREN - THEY ARE NOT GUILTY."

Written by a 10-year-old refugee girl from Vukovar, Croatia.

Bosnia-Hercegovina

Still with their cries and screams my streets are filled,
The sound of eighty thousand raped women.
Just last week five thousand of my men killed,
Their bodies burned inside a great oven.
Thirty thousand of my newborns missing,
Snatched from the warm bosoms of their mothers.
Their echo of their screams yet unfading,
Tremble the hearts of their fighting fathers.
My little girls as young as three or four,
Brutally gang-raped and left to die.
Now to my fellow man I look no more,
For he has ignored our desperate cry.
Though my people are begging for kindness,
Our world turns its head in hateful blindness.

Part Seven APPENDIX ACTIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS

1. "Ethnic Cleansing" and Other Human Violations

"Throughout the conflict, there have been massive and systematic violations of human rights, as well as grave violations of humanitarian law in most of the territories of the former Yugoslavia. "Ethnic cleansing" - the elimination, by the ethnic groups exercising control over a given territory of other ethnic groups - is believed to be the direct cause of the vast majority of the human rights violations. The practice of "ethnic cleansing" involves a variety of methods including harassment, discrimination, beatings, torture, rape, summary executions, expulsions, shelling of civilian population centres, relocation of populations by force, confiscation of property and destruction of homes and places of worship and cultural institutions...

On July 13, 1992, the Security Council, in Resolution 764 (1992), reaffirmed that all parties were bound to comply with the obligations under international humanitarian law and in particular with the Geneva Convention of 12 August, 1949 for the protection of war victims and that persons who commit or order the commis-

sion of grave breaches of the Convention were individually responsible in respect of such breaches...

On 13 August, by Resolution 771 (1992), the Security Council reaffirmed that all parties to the conflict were bound to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and strongly condemned violations, including ethnic cleansing. With this, the Council again demanded that relevant international humanitarian organizations, in particular the ICRC, be granted immediate, unimpeded and continued access to all camps, prisons and detention centres within the territory of the former Yugoslavia. It further called on States and international humanitarian organizations to collate substantiated information relating to violations of international humanitarian law, and requested the Secretary-General to submit such information to the Council with recommendations on an appropriate follow-up response. Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter, the Council decided that all parties and others concerned in the former Yugoslavia shall comply with the provision of its Resolution 771 (1992). ("The...Yugoslavia," pgs. 25-26).

2. Special Rapporteur Appointed by the Commission on Human Rights.

"On 25 August, 1992, the General Assembly, in its Resolution 46/242, condemned the massive violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, in particular, the abhorrent practice of "ethnic cleansing", and demanded that the practice be brought to an end immediately. It called for further steps to stop the massive and forcible displacement of the population from and within Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as other forms of violations of human rights in the former Yugoslavia...The Assembly also demanded the safe, unconditional and honourable repatriation of the refugees and deportees to their homes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and recognized their right to receive repatriation for their losses...

The United Nations Commission on Human Rights, in its Resolution 1992/S-1/1, condemned "ethnic cleansing" and human rights violations, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It asked that its Chair appoint a Special Rapporteur to investigate first-hand the human rights situation in the former Yugoslavia and in particular, within Bosnia and Herzegovina, to make recommendations for ending human rights violations as well as for preventing future

occurrences and to gather, systematically, information on possible human rights violations which may constitute war crimes.

Subsequently, Mr. Tadeusz Mazowiecki, former Prime Minister of Poland, was appointed as Special Rapporteur...In his first report of 28 August, 1992, and reconfirmed in his second report on 27 October, 1992, he states the following: "Human Rights violations are being perpetrated by all parties to the conflicts. There are victims on all sides. However, the situation of the Muslim population is particularly tragic: they feel they are threatened with extermination..."

On 30 November, 1992, the Commission adopted Resolution 1992/S-2/1, in which it condemned again all human rights violations and "ethnic cleansing" in the territory of the former Yugoslavia and called upon all States to consider the acts in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Croatia constituted genocide. On 18 December, the General Assembly, in its Resolution 47/147...commended the Special Rapporteur for his reports and urged all States and organizations to consider implementing the recommendations contained in those reports...The Special Rapporteur stated that evidence was mounting of war crimes during the conflict in both Croatia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Numerous cases had been documented of summary execution and death threats, disappearances, torture and ill-treatment of detainees and destruction of property, including religious sites.

On 23 February, the Commission adopted two resolutions. Resolution 1993/7, *Inter Alia*, requested the Secretary-General to provide for the appointment of human rights field officers in the former Yugoslavia. By Resolution 1993/8, the Commission condemned the abhorrent practice of rape and the abuse of women and children in the territory of the former Yugoslavia which was being used as an instrument of "ethnic cleansing." ("The...Yugoslavia," pgs. 26-27).

3. Release of Prisoners and Detainees.

"After ICRC visited camps and detention centres in August, 1992, the three Bosnian sides agreed on 27 August on the release of all civilians who had been illegally detained and on the evacuation of the sick and wounded from the camps. On 1 October, the parties signed, under ICRC auspices, an "Agreement on the Release and Transfer of Prisoners", thereby committing themselves

to liberate all detainees, including the small percentage of combatants detained - except those who were accused of committing grave breaches of international humanitarian law in accordance with plans of release to be prepared by the ICRC. That agreement, which was to be implemented by 31 October, 1992, was based on the Program of Action on Humanitarian Issues, drawn up at the London session of the International Conference on the former Yugoslavia.

According to ICRC, the agreement of 1 October has not been implemented because the three sides did not fully respect their obligations under the Agreement, and also because of difficulties in finding third countries willing to accept the prisoners wishing to be transferred temporarily to neighbouring countries." ("The...Yugoslavia," Doc. U.N./DPI/131/Rev. 1. pgs. 27-28).

4. Commission of Experts

"On 6 October, 1992, the Security Council adopted Resolution 780 (1992), expressing its grave alarm at the continuing reports of widespread violations of international humanitarian law in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. The Council requested the Secretary-General to establish an impartial Commission of Experts to examine and analyze the information submitted pursuant to Resolution 771 (1992) and the present resolution, together with such information as the Commission may obtain through its own investigations or efforts, with a view to providing the Secretary-General with its conclusions on the evidence of grave breaches of the 1949 Geneva Conventions and other violations of humanitarian law, committed in the territory of the former Yugoslavia.

In a report dated 14 October, 1992, to the Security Council, the Secretary-General announced his decision to establish a Commission of Experts. On 23 October, the Secretary-General informed the Council that he had appointed the following five persons as members of the Commission: Professor Fritz Kalshoven of the Netherlands, Chair, Professor Cherif Bassiouni of Egypt, Mr. William Fenrick of Canada, Judge Keba Mbaye of Senegal and Professor Torkel Opsahl of Norway." ("The...Yugoslavia," pgs. 28-29).

5. Reports of Massive Rape.

"On December 18, 1992, appalled by reports of the massive, organized and systematic detention and rape of women, particu-

larly Muslim women, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Security Council, by its Resolution 798 (1992) strongly condemned these acts of unspeakable brutality, expressed support for the initiative of the European Community to dispatch a delegation to investigate the situation, and requested the Secretary-General to provide all necessary support to enable the delegation to have free and secure access to the places of detention. The investigative mission made two visits to the former Yugoslavia, from 18 to 24 December, 1992 and from 19 to 26 January, 1993. Its final report was circulated as a document of the Security Council on 3 February, 1993." ("The...Yugoslavia," p. 29).

6. International Tribunal.

"On 22 February, 1993, the Security Council adopted Resolution 808 (1993), by which it decided that an international tribunal shall be established for the prosecution of persons responsible for serious violations of international law, committed in the territory of the former Yugoslavia since 1991. It requested the Secretary-General to submit, for consideration by the Council at the earliest possible date, a report on all aspects of this matter...On 3 May, the Secretary-General submitted to the Council a detailed report covering such issues as the legal basis for the establishment of the International Tribunal, its competence and organization, investigation and pre-trial proceedings, co-operation and judicial assistance, and general provisions. The Statute of the Tribunal was annexed to the report." ("The...Yugoslavia," p. 29).

7. Decision by International Court of Justice.

"On 8 April, 1993, the International Court of Justice issued an Order of Provisional Measures, in which it called upon the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) to "...immediately...take all measures within its power to prevent the commission of the crime of genocide." Court stated that the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia "...should, in particular, ensure that any military, paramilitary or irregular armed units which may be directed or supported by it, as well as any organizations and persons which may be subject to its control, direction, or influence, do not commit any acts of genocide, conspire to commit any acts of genocide, or direct public incitement to commit genocide, or of complicity in genocide, whether directed against the

Muslim population of Bosnia and Herzegovina or against any other national, ethnical, racial or religious group." ("The...Yugoslavia," p. 30).

VIII INTERNATIONAL LAW PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

I UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is a universal declaration of children's rights, which has been ratified by 154 countries and states including all the countries of former Yugoslavia.

PREAMBLE

The States Parties to the present Convention,

Considering that, in accordance with the principles proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations, recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Bearing in mind that the peoples of the United Nations have, in the Charter, reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights and in the dignity and worth of the human person, and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Recognizing that the United Nations has, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the International Covenants on Human Rights, proclaimed and agreed that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such

as race, colour, sex, languages, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status,

Recalling that, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations has proclaimed that childhood is entitled to special care and assistance.

Convinced that the family, as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children, should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community,

Recognizing that the child, for the full and harmonious development of his personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding,

Considering that the child should be fully prepared to live an individual life in society, and brought up in the spirit of the ideals proclaimed in the charter of the United Nations, and in particular in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity,

Bearing in mind that the need to extend particular care to the child has been stated in the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child of 1924 and in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child adopted by the General Assembly on 20 November 1959 and recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (in particular in articles 23 and 24), in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (in particular in article 10) and in the statutes and relevant instruments of specialized agencies and international organizations concerned with the welfare of children,

Bearing in mind that, as indicated in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, 'the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well after birth.'

Recalling the provision of the Declaration on Social and Legal Principles relating to the Protection and Welfare of Children, with Special Reference to Foster Placement and Adoption Nationally and Internationally; the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules, for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (The Beijing Rules); and the Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict,

Recognizing that, in all countries in the world, there are children living in exceptionally difficult conditions, and that such children need special consideration,

Taking due account of the importance of the traditions and cultural values of each people for the protection and harmonious development of the child,

Recognizing the importance of international co-operating for improving to living conditions of children in every country, in particular in the developing countries,

Have agreed follows:

Article 1

For the purposes of the present Convention, a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

Article 2

1. States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.
2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment on the basis of the status, activities, expressed opinions, or beliefs of the child's parents, legal guardians, or family members.

* * * * *

Article 4

States Parties shall undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative, and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognized in the present Convention. With regard to economic, social and cultural rights, States Parties shall undertake such measures to the maximum extent of their available resources and, where needed, within the framework of international co-operation.

Article 6

1. States Parties recognize that every child has the inherent right to life.
2. States Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child.

Article 9

1. States Parties shall ensure that a child shall not be separated from his or her parents against their will, except when competent authorities subject to judicial review determine, in accordance with applicable law and procedures, that such separation is necessary for the best interests of the child. Such determination may be necessary in a particular case such as one involving abuse or neglect of the child by the parents, or one where the parents are living separately and a decision must be made as to the child's place of residence.

Article 22

1. States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure that a child who is seeking refugee status or who is considered a refugee in accordance with applicable international or domestic law and procedures shall, whether unaccompanied by his or her parents or by any other person, receive appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance in the enjoyment of applicable rights set forth in the present Convention and in other International human rights or humanitarian instruments to which to said States are Parties.
2. For this purpose, States Parties shall provide, as they consider appropriate, co-operation in any efforts by the United Nations and other competent inter-governmental organizations or non-governmental organizations co-operating with the United Nations to protect and assist such child and to trace the parents or other

members of the family of any refugee child in order to obtain information necessary for reunification with his or her family. In case where no parents or other members of the family can be found, the child shall be accorded the same protection as any other child permanently or temporarily deprived of his or her family environment for any reason, as set forth in the present Convention.

Article 30

In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.

Article 35

States Parties shall take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent the abduction of, the sale of or traffic in children for any purpose or in any form.

Article 38

1. States Parties shall ensure that:
 - a) No child shall be subject to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Neither capital punishment nor life imprisonment without possibility of release shall be imposed for offenses committed by persons below eighteen years of age;
 - b) No child shall be deprived of his or her liberty unlawfully or arbitrarily. The arrest, detention or imprisonment of a child shall be in conformity with the law and shall be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time;

- c) Every child deprived of liberty shall be treated with humanity and respect for the inherent dignity of the human person, and in a manner which takes into account the needs of persons of his or her age. In particular, every child deprived of liberty shall be separated from adults unless it is considered in the child's best interest not to do so and shall have the right to maintain contact with his or her family through correspondence and visits, save exceptional circumstances;
- d) Every child deprived of his or her liberty shall have the right to prompt access to legal and other appropriate assistance, as well as the right to challenge the legality of the deprivation of his or her liberty before a court or other competent, independent and impartial authority, and to a prompt decision on any such action.

* * * * *

Article 38

1. States Parties undertake to respect and to ensure respect for rules of international humanitarian law applicable to them in armed conflicts which are relevant to the child.
2. States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure that persons who have not attained the age of fifteen years do not take a direct part in hostilities.
3. States Parties shall refrain from recruiting any person who has not attained the age of fifteen years into their armed forces. In recruiting among those persons who have attained the age of fifteen years but who have not attained the age of eighteen years, States Parties shall endeavour to give priority to those who are oldest.

In accordance with their obligations under international humanitarian law to protect the civilian population in armed conflict, States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure protection and care of children who are affected by an armed conflict.

* * * * *

Article 39

State Parties shall take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim: any form of neglect, exploitation or abuse, torture or any other form of

cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, or armed conflicts. Such recovery and reintegration shall take place in an environment which fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of the child.

II GENEVA CONVENTION RELATIVE TO THE PROTECTION OF CIVILIAN PERSONS IN TIME OF WAR 1949

Entry into force: 21 October 1950

Article 14

In time of peace the High Contracting Parties and after the outbreak of hostilities, the Parties thereto, may establish in their own territory and, if the need arises, in occupied areas, hospital and safety zones and localities so organized as to protect from the effects of war, wounded, sick and aged persons, children under fifteen, expectant mothers and mothers children under seven...

* * * * *

Article 24

The Parties to the conflict shall take the necessary measures to ensure that children under fifteen, who are orphaned from their families as a result of the war, are not left to their own resources, and that their maintenance, the exercise of their religion and their education are facilitated in all circumstances. Their education shall, as far as possible, be entrusted to persons of a similar cultural tradition.

The Parties to the conflict shall facilitate the reception of such children in a neutral country for the duration of the conflict with the consent of the Protecting Power, if any, and under due safe-guards for the observance of the principles stated in the first paragraph.

The shall, furthermore, endeavour to arrange for all children under twelve to be identified by the wearing of identity tags, or by some other means.

* * * * *

Article 50

The Occupying Power shall, with the cooperation of the national and local authorities, facilitate the proper working of all institutions devote to the care and education of children.

The Occupying Power shall take all necessary steps to facilitate the identification of children and the registration of their parentage. It may not, in any case, change their personal status, nor enlist them in information or organizations subordinate to it.

Should the local institutions be inadequate for the purpose, the Occupying Power shall make arrangements for the maintenance and education, if possible by persons of their own nationality, language and religion, of children who are orphaned or separated from their parents as a result of the war and who cannot be adequately cared for by a near relative or friend.

A special section of the Bureau set up in accordance with article 136 shall be responsible for taking all necessary steps to identify children whose identify is in doubt. Particulars of their parents or other near relatives should always be recorded if available

The Occupying Power shall not hinder the application of any preferential measures in regard to food, medical care and protection against the protection against the effects of war which may have been adopted prior to the occupation in favour of children under fifteen years, expectant mothers, and mothers of children under seven years.

* * * * *

Article 82

The Detaining Power shall, as far as possible, accommodate the internees according to their nationality, language and customs. Internees who are nationals of the same country shall not be separated merely because they have different languages.

Throughout the duration of their internment, members of the same family, and in particular parents and children, shall be lodged together in the same place of internment, except when separation of a temporary nature in necessitated for reason of employment or health or for the purposes of enforcement of the revisions of Chapter IX of the present section. Internees may request that their children who are left at liberty without parental care shall be interned with them.

Wherever possible, interned members of the same family shall be housed in the same premises and given separate accommodation from their other internees, together with facilities for leading a proper family life.

* * * * *

Article 89

Daily food for internees shall be sufficient in quantity, quality and variety to keep internees in a good state of health and prevent the development of nutritional deficiencies. Account shall also be taken of the customary diet of the internees.

Internees shall also be given the means by which they can prepare for themselves any additional food in their possession.

Sufficient drinking water shall be supplied to internees. The use of tobacco shall be permitted.

Internees who work shall receive additional rations in proportion to the kind of labour which they perform.

Expectant and nursing mothers and children under fifteen years ago, shall be given additional food, in proportion to their physiological needs.

* * * * *

Article 94

The Detaining Power shall encourage intellectual, educational and recreational pursuits, sports and games amongst internees, whilst leaving them free to take part in them or not. It shall take all practicable measures to ensure the exercise thereof, in particular by providing suitable premises.

All possible facilities shall be granted to internees to continue their studies or to take up new subjects. The educations of children and young people shall be ensured: they shall be allowed to attend schools either within the place of internment or outside.

Internees shall be given opportunities for physical exercise, sports and outdoor games. For this purpose, sufficient open spaces shall be set aside in all places of internment. Special playgrounds shall be reserved for children and young people.

* * * * *

Article 132

Each interned person shall be released by the Detaining Power as soon as the reasons which necessitated his internment no longer exist.

The Parties to the conflict shall, moreover, endeavour during the course of hostilities, to conclude agreements for the release, the repatriation, the return to places of residence or the accommodation in a neutral country of certain classes of internees, in particular children, pregnant women and mothers with infants and young children, wounded and sick, and internees who have been detained for a long time.

III PROTOCOL ADDITIONAL TO THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS OF 12 AUGUST 1949, AND RELATING TO THE PROTECTION OF VICTIMS OF INTERNATIONAL

ARMED CONFLICT (Protocol No 1) 1977

Entry into force: 7 December 1978

* * * * *

Article 77

1. Children shall be the object of special respect and shall be protected against any form of indecent assault. The Parties to the conflict shall provide them with the care and aid they require, whether because of their age or for any other reason.
2. The Parties to the conflict shall take all feasible measure in order that children who have not attained the age of fifteen years do not take a direct part in hostilities and, in particular, they shall refrain from recruiting them into their armed forces. In recruiting among those persons who have attained the age of fifteen years but who have not attained the age of eighteen years the Parties to the conflict shall endeavour to give priority to those who are oldest.
3. If, in exceptional cases, despite the provisions of paragraph 2, children who have not attained the age of fifteen years take a direct part in hostilities and fall into the power of an adverse Party, they

shall continue to benefit from the special protection accorded by this Article, whether or not they are prisoners of war.

4. If arrested, detained or interned for reasons related to the armed conflict, children shall be held in quarters separate from the quarters of adults, except where families are accommodated as family units as provided in Article 75, paragraph 5.
5. The death penalty for of offence related to the armed conflict shall not be executed who had not attained the age of eighteen years at the time the offence was committed.

* * * * *

Article 78

1. No Party to the conflict shall arrange for the evacuation of children, other than its own nationals, to a foreign country except for a temporary evacuation where compelling reasons of the health or medical treatment of the children or, except in occupied territory, their safety, so require. Where the parents or legal guardians can be found their written consent to such evacuation is required. If these persons cannot be found, the written consent to such evacuation of the persons who by law or customs are primarily responsible for the care of the children is required. Any such evacuation shall be supervised by the Protecting Power in agreement with the Parties concerned, namely, the Party arranging for the evacuation, the Party receiving the children and any Parties whose nationals are being evacuated. In each case, all Parties to the conflict shall take all feasible precautions to avoid endangering the evacuation.

IV PROTOCOL ADDITIONAL TO THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS OF 12 AUGUST 1949, AND RELATING TO THE PROTECTION OF VICTIMS OF NON-INTERNATIONAL ARMED CONFLICT (Protocol No 2/1977)

* * * * *

Article 4

1. All persons who do not take a direct part or who have ceased to take part in hostilities, whether or not their liberty has been restricted, are entitled to respect for their persons, honour and convictions and religious practices. They shall in all circumstances be treated humanely, without any adverse distinction. It is prohibited to order that there shall be no survivors.
2. Without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, the following acts against the persons referred to in paragraph 1 are and shall remain prohibited at any time and any place whatsoever:
 - a) violence to the life, health and physical or mental well-being of person, in particular murder as well as cruel treatment such as torture, mutilation or any form of corporal punishment;
 - b) collective punishments
 - c) taking of hostages;
 - d) acts of terrorism;
 - e) outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment, rape, enforced prostitution and any form of indecent assault;
 - f) slavery and the slave trade in all their forms;
 - g) pillage
 - h) threats to commit any of the foregoing acts
3. Children will be provided with the care and aid they require, and in particular:
 - a) they shall receive an education including religious and moral education, in keeping with the wishes of their parents, or in the absence of parents, of those responsible for their care;
 - b) all appropriate steps shall be taken to facilitate the reunion of families temporarily separated;

- c) children who have not attained the age of fifteen years shall neither be recruited in the armed forces or groups nor allowed to take part in hostilities;
- d) the special protection provided by this Article to children who have not attained the age of fifteen years shall remain applicable to them if they take part in hostilities despite the provisions of subparagraph (c) and are captured;
- e) measures shall be taken, if necessary, and whenever possible with the consent of their parents or persons who by law or custom are primarily responsible for their care, to remove children temporarily from the area in which hostilities are taking place to a safer area within the country and ensure that they are accompanied by persons responsible for their safety and well being.

Article 5

1. In addition to the provisions of Article 4 the following provisions shall be respected as a minimum with regard to persons deprived of their liberty for reasons related to the armed conflict, whether they are interned or detained:
 - a) the wounded and the sick shall be treated in accordance with Article 7;
 - b) the persons referred to in this paragraph shall, to the same extent as the local civilian population, be provided with food and drinking water and be afforded safeguards as regards health and hygiene and protection against the rigours of the climate and dangers of the armed conflict;
 - c) they shall be allowed to receive individual or collective relief;
 - d) they shall be allowed to practise their religion and, if requested and appropriate, to receive spiritual assistance from persons, such as chaplains, performing religious functions;
 - e) they shall, if made to work, have the benefit of working conditions and safeguards similar to those enjoyed by the local civilian population.
2. Those who are responsible for the internment or detention of the persons referred to in paragraph 1 shall also, within the limits of their capabilities, respect the following provisions relating to such persons:
 - a) except when men and women of a family are accommodated together, women shall be held in quarters separated from

- those of men and shall be under the immediate supervision of women;
- b) they shall be allowed to send and receive letters and cards, the number of which may be limited by competent authority if it deems necessary;
 - c) place of internment and detention shall not be located close to the combat zone. The persons referred to in paragraph 1 shall be evacuated when the places where they are interned or detained become particularly exposed to danger arising out of the armed conflict, if their evacuation can be carried out under adequate conditions of safety;
 - d) they shall have the benefit of medical examinations;
 - e) their physical or mental health and integrity shall not be endangered by any unjustified act or omission. Accordingly, it is prohibited to subject the persons described in this Article to any medical procedure which is not indicated by the state of health of the person concerned, and which is not consistent with the generally accepted medical standards applied to free persons under similar medical circumstances.
3. Persons who are not covered by paragraph 1 but whose liberty has been restricted in any way whatsoever from reasons related to the armed conflict shall be treated humanely in accordance with Article 4 and with paragraphs 1(a), (c) and (d), and 2(b) of this Article.
4. If it is decided to release persons deprived of their liberty, necessary measures to ensure their safety shall be taken by those so deciding.

Article 6

1. This Article is applies to the prosecution and punishment of criminal offenses related to the armed conflict.

* * * * *

4. The death penalty shall not be pronounced on persons who were under the age of eighteen years at the time of the offence and shall not be carried out on pregnant women or mothers of young children.

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